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On veldt and Farm

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**ON
VELDT AND FARM**



ON
VELDT AND FARM

IN BECHUANALAND—CAPE COLONY—
THE TRANSVAAL—AND NATAL

BY
FRANCES MACNAB [pend.]
Fraser, Agnes

EDWARD ARNOLD
LONDON NEW YORK
37 BEDFORD STREET 70 FIFTH AVENUE
1897

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TO
THE COUNTY THAT I LOVE,
I Dedicate
THIS BOOK.

PARABOL REVOLUTION

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book has been already prefaced by a series of articles which have appeared in the press from time to time.

Upon finding that it was considered worth while to pirate some of these contributions, I determined to offer the whole of my notes to the public, and I have done so as rapidly as possible.

There is no pretence at literary excellence, but it is my hope and belief that the matter contained in these pages will prove both interesting and useful.

Should they fall into the hands of the colonists amongst whom I passed some very happy months, I trust they will forgive me if my criticisms are sometimes sharp. I will ask them to regard my strictures as the smiting of the righteous, which the Psalmist preferred to the balms of the wicked.

In conclusion, I must take this opportunity of recognising the great kindness which I received in a land

which has rightly been the land of adoption for many who wander from their own country.

I have especially to thank Mr. Dumaesque Manning for assisting me to 'trek' in Bechuanaland; the Surveyor-General for his kindness in supplying me with a map of that country; Mr. John Frost, Dr. Macall Theal, Mr. Peter Borchers, Mr. John Noble, Mr. James Macalister, and the firm of Dunn and Co. for much kindness; Sir James Sivewright for procuring me the railway pass to which my press credentials entitled me; Mr. David Hunter for a like service in Natal; Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Sutton for their friendly advice; and lastly, Mr. Hofmeyr, the Rev. James Gray, Mr. Julius Weil, Madame Koopmans de Wet, Mr. Lionel Phillips, and many others—farmers, merchants, planters, and traders—for their great kindness and hospitality to me, a stranger and a wayfarer.

I would make special mention of my Dutch friends, of whose cordiality I shall always retain a warm recollection.

THE AUTHOR.

January, 1897.



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ON VELDT AND FARM

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE recent crisis in the Transvaal, which has attracted so much general notice, owes its origin to a variety of causes. In this it is only preserving the orthodox character of a true political upheaval; for these things do not, and never can, happen from a single cause. The effects of the commotion—or its antithesis—will also be far-reaching; and just as the excitement prevented men from perceiving the numerous indications of impending changes, which showed themselves long before the incident of the Jameson raid, so at the present time there is a veil over most men's minds, and it is pretty generally believed that all will return to a satisfactory basis, so soon as the mining interest settles down.

But the affairs of the Rand are only a small corner of the revolution which is taking place in South Africa; and the object of this book is to place before the public the development which will immediately follow in other departments than that of the mines.

If we look back over the last ten years, we shall see

that a vast European population—coming, not from rural districts, but from the great European and American centres, and accustomed to all the luxuries of nineteenth-century civilization—has been pouring into South Africa at the rate of between five and eight hundred a week. They came in—with galvanized iron and tinned meats—to a semi-barbarous land where water often is not obtainable, and food-stuffs are scarce. The people in possession of the land were antiquated in their habits, yet in their own way they made some attempts to profit by the increased purchasing power of the market. They probably did all that men—without knowledge and without capital—could have done. But it only required the slightest pressure from any cause, whether drought or disease, to break down at once the delusion of Boer methods.

When Mr. Kruger conceived the policy of 'worrying the tortoise into showing its head,' he precipitated with his own hands the death of Boer policy. There is ample evidence to prove that he was misled on several vital points. Whether the assistance of Germany was formally solicited or not, there is at all events sufficient indication that Mr. Kruger looked for sympathy from that quarter. There is no contesting the fact that he despatched emissaries to the Cape Colony to urge the Boers there to come into line with his burghers in opposition to Great Britain. On January 13, 1896, the Volkraad of the Orange Free State adopted a resolution to assist the Transvaal at all times if required. Subsequently, at the Customs Conference in the Free State, the sympathy of the Free State with the Transvaal was clearly indicated. This gave a political colour to the case, and a threat was thrown out that Cape Colony

would annul the Customs Union, and cast in her lot with Rhodesia. There was an element of unexpectedness in this, for hitherto the Cape had been subservient. Mr. Kruger believed up to the time of the Customs Conference that he was winning all along the line, and arraying the forces of the Boers against Imperial Britain and the English in the colony. Natal would be crushed ; the mines handed over to Germans or Hollanders ; the British flag hauled down, and Kruger, President of United South Africa, would plant his Boers upon the land, and carry out a Kaffir policy through South Africa similar to that which has been pursued in the Transvaal. So ran his dream.

But the Pharaoh of Pretoria reckoned with the usual near-sightedness of a mere tyrant. Other events had been taking place in South Africa, which were destined to invalidate his schemes, and smite them with a slow-working paralysis. The Almighty Himself was not on Kruger's side this time, for first there came a drought, and close upon the drought swarms of locusts, and after the locusts a great plague.

Had these troubles attacked the Transvaal alone, the matter would probably have increased, instead of diminishing, Kruger's strength. It would have intensified the sympathy he was so terribly anxious to secure. But mercifully the troubles were not stayed. The drought made itself felt even in Natal, which is usually a comparatively well-watered territory. The locusts spread to the sea. The rinderpest swept off cattle by hundreds of thousands in the mighty native reserves of Bechuanaland, and cleared the Free State of almost all its cattle. Meantime the sheep in the Karoo had nothing to eat, and very little to drink, and in some

districts the stock offered for sale to the butchers was so emaciated as to be almost worthless.

Then a panic on the score of famine arose in Cape-town, vigorously supported by the press. Under a variety of sensational headings, letters and articles appeared in different newspapers, and meetings were held demanding the repeal of the duties on food-stuffs.

The line which the agitation took was a violent attack upon the Bond or Dutch policy of Protection, and an approach towards the Free Trade policy of Natal, which had hitherto been snubbed by the Old Colony.

To one who compares the tone of the press a year previously with that of to-day, it will seem incredible that so great a change was about to take place. The utmost circumspection was then exercised about the expression of the slightest shadow of dissent from Boer idiosyncrasies, when suddenly a howl of execration and abuse was heard, and the most open-spoken criticism, which laid bare the domestic concerns, as it were, of the Bond. Mr. Kruger found to his dismay that, instead of worrying a tortoise, he had been irritating another animal whose strength he had never suspected. The continual aggravation of high duties imposed on food-stuffs, and extreme railway rates, with the consequent discomfort in the lives of people who were fresh from Europe, became the chief topic of interest. 'I won't live in a country where they won't feed you,' said a young American when he had to spend six weeks without potatoes at the mining centre of Heidelberg. But there were plenty of people who, having embarked in certain enterprises or taken up appointments, were neither minded to go away nor to endure the dis-

comfort of doing without ordinary comforts. That the cry against food duties was used for political ends is no doubt true, but there was plenty of ground for complaint.

In spite of a vast hinterland of virgin soil, supplies in Capetown have been very inadequate. It is by no means uncommon to be given tinned milk, while tinned butter comes in the hundredweight. Until last year, when the Bond carried a further measure of protection, Australia and New Zealand supplied a large proportion of the meat, and probably more than half the wheat used in South Africa is imported from abroad.

A visit to any one of the warehouses belonging to the merchant shippers will afford ample proof that South Africa is quite as far from being self-supporting as Great Britain. Enormous supplies of 'bully beef,' tinned haddocks, and other preserved food-stuffs, show what basis the market of Africa rests upon. It is fairly a matter for surprise that tinned tomatoes should be shipped from New York, although the tomato is an indigenous weed.

Another feature which added strength to the Free Trade movement was the rapidity with which money was made by men who wished neither to hoard it nor send it away. It needed a channel on the spot, and though some amongst them may have been ready enough to spend it in undesirable pleasures, there was a large population who strenuously demanded a degree of comfort similar to that enjoyed by our middle classes at home. Fresh provisions, pure, sweet and unadulterated food, came first, as the best way to stave off the suffering and sickness which is all too prevalent. The cheapening of these necessities, and the improving of

their quality, was a distinct aim in many minds. It was a demand made by men who understood little beyond the fact that so much of their earnings went in taxes; and the repeal of these taxes was the first step towards home comfort in Africa. The strangest feature in the case is that no adequate attempt was made in South Africa itself to meet this demand for bread, meat and vegetables.

In California, and other mining centres, the agricultural development has a good deal more than kept pace with that of the mines, and has now altogether outstripped it. In Africa the conditions of farming are exceptionally hard, and the industry requires nursing at the outset. Then, the men in possession of the soil have, by their ignorance, heaped up difficulties. They need teaching, and yet refuse to be taught. Hence comes the scarcity.

To the town-bred clerk the Boer may be as good a farmer as anyone else; at any rate, he will accept the Boer's dictum, that none but Boers know how to farm in Africa. Then, seeing the wretched thing which the Boer makes of it, the young man naturally turns elsewhere to invest his enterprise.

As though countersigning the Boer's statement, the failures of many British agriculturists, who have embarked in African farming, have been conspicuous. Those men who rushed in unprovided with local knowledge wherewith to direct their energy and determination were bound to fail. They have, generally speaking, started with a strong belief in the advantage of methods which have been proved to be successful in Great Britain; and have ignored the fact that the great differences in soil and climate render the best home

system merely experimental in South Africa. The result of their rashness has been dearly-earned experience and too often beggary; which has obliged them to turn elsewhere for a living.

If, however, we wish to look at what has been done in Africa to meet the wants of the rapidly increasing industrial centres, we shall find that all the impetus and the skill is due to British emigrants, a band of whom settled in the Eastern Provinces in 1820. The history of the matter is as follows. A period of distress and depression in agriculture at home decided the Imperial Government to vote the sum of £50,000, 'in order to send some of the able-bodied surplus population from the old country, where they were so much in the way, to the eastern frontier of Cape Colony, where they were so much wanted.' About 5,000 were shipped in Government transports; and on arrival each family received a grant of 100 acres. They were also presented with waggons, and provided with rations at Government expense until they could raise sufficient for themselves. The history of this movement is admirably given in the 'Handbook to South Africa' published by Messrs. Silver and Co. For the present purpose it is sufficient to state that from this settlement the prosperity of the Eastern Provinces, and the rise of the important port of Port Elizabeth, arose. It is there that South African methods have been sounded and reduced to something approaching scientific systems; and therefore if a farmer intends settling in any other part of Africa, even Rhodesia or Natal, he could not do better than land at Port Elizabeth, and proceed to study African farming on the advanced farms of the King Williamstown, Grahams-town, and Schoombie farmers. A hundred pounds, or

even less, spent in such a local education would be very usefully employed, and such men would go on to Rhodesia or Natal better equipped for a start than after years devoted to the same subject in England, even though part of the time were spent in one of the admirable colonial colleges, such as Hollesley Bay.

At the same time, it is impossible to lay too great stress on the urgent necessity for studying localities and not persisting in any method in one place merely because it succeeded elsewhere. The best plan is to take up the threads of the new place exactly as they are found, and then very cautiously attempt the introduction of whatever alterations appear likely to succeed, and to do this at first more as an experiment than with the hard-and-fast determination to stick to it as the one orthodox road to salvation.

There can be no doubt that hitherto British enterprise has been hampered by the Dutch. This is not unnatural, and scarcely to be wondered at. It suits the Boers to grow a little for a high price rather than a great deal for a moderate price. They are lacking in perspective, and no race under the sun is so little gifted with imagination. That they are clever, no one can doubt who comes in contact with the best specimens of the race; but a not uncommon trait of intense self-sufficiency, very prevalent among the uneducated class in any country, makes criticism unendurable to them. Of course, the Englishman's farm alongside of their own is a very practically-illustrated piece of criticism; and too much allowance can scarcely be made for the temper of a man who is touched on the raw every time he looks out from his own doorway. Under the Boers the fine grain-growing district of Malmesbury has been

reduced to ruin, and, with a frantic effort to keep up prices, the Dutch vote has engineered protective duties upon wheat. The land is not half cultivated, and, having been forced with strong applications of guano, will now produce only the most miserably thin crops. Even worse than the grain is the case of cattle. Diseases appear to have been present in the early days of most cattle countries. Even in Great Britain they are only held in check by extreme vigilance. In the Argentine a few years ago disease had to be encountered, but it was resolutely met and stamped out. The Cape has been engaged in raising cattle for the last 200 years, and diseases have multiplied and become more virulent. The Boer looks upon disease as a decree of Divine providence, which it would be impious to arrest. Cattle diseases are consequently rampant throughout South Africa. It is a matter of congratulation that the Government has been induced by the farmers of the Eastern Provinces to establish a veterinary staff to study the causes of these diseases, and to discover remedies. The endeavours of Dr. Hutcheon and his staff have been successful up to a certain point; at least, it may be stated that they have collected a mass of valuable notes, and proved that science is capable of taking the field successfully.

There have been other indications that Government was disposed to grapple with the initial difficulties of agriculture. Urged on by the Progressive Dutch and the energetic British and colonial farmers, an Act compelling farmers to dip their sheep for scab was passed, though in the teeth of a strong Boer opposition. In the Calvinia district and at Beaufort West, Government erected water-storage and irrigation works, and

during the late session (of 1896) a Bill was passed authorizing the construction of other reservoirs.

The scheme is simply the establishment by Government of water-storage and the sale of water upon a commercial basis, similar to that undertaken by limited-liability companies.

Thus far matters had progressed in public opinion before the grievances of Johannesburg had been laid bare. The sudden sympathy evoked by the sufferings of a population whose food-stuffs were severely taxed caught like wild-fire in Cape Colony. Too late Kruger must have perceived the error of his policy, for in April last the rates upon food-stuffs on the Netherland Government line were reduced by one-half. But real scarcity stared not only Johannesburg, but his own people, in the face. A day of humiliation and prayer followed hard upon the vigorous buying up of food-stuffs and mules for transport; but the conviction was being driven home, even amongst his own people, that other measures of a preventive character would have been better. Railways suddenly rose in public estimation, and the value of Johannesburg and its mines was manifested to a people who saw their farms reduced to parched, bare, and desolate veldt.

The agitation in Capetown against Protection and the results likely to accrue will be dealt with in due course in the following pages. It must, however, be borne in mind that the present condition of things agricultural in South Africa is one of transition. Enormous changes are about to take place, based on the reversal of the old Boer policy. These changes will affect markets, transport, and raw products; and all along the line opportunities will be offered for men to go in

and add to the prosperity and comfort of the country, whilst reaping profits for themselves. The main difficulty in dealing with the subject, apart from the enormous field which it covers, is the great variety of the climate and soil. Though the distances in Africa are great, it must ever remain one country; and yet there are so many territories where volcanic changes have split up the soil, or changed the course of rivers, or blown aside the barriers of lakes, that no regular system can be applied to any one branch of agriculture, such as is practicable in the case of ranching in the Argentine, and grain-growing in Australia.

Very often a large acreage has to be bought to secure the 'here a little and there a little' where something may be achieved; and as the labour-supply is very cheap and abundant, more will be done by manual labour than by machinery. These points are sufficient to indicate that farming in South Africa can never be treated in as sweeping or wholesale a manner as elsewhere.

Of this, at least, we can be sure, that the subject of raw products and of agriculture in general has pushed itself into the field of politics, and that a people believed to be given over to the mere greed of gain have been aroused to study political economy in a very practical manner. That their conclusions may always be just, that the solution they would apply to problems will always be wise, we can hardly hope; but of this we may feel fairly secure, that no Treasurer of Cape Colony will again declare without hesitation, as Sir Gordon Sprigg did to the present writer, that capable agriculturists willing to come into the country and guarantee the investment of capital in land '*shall get*

nothing ' at the hand of Government. It is more men of the same class as the Eastern Province farmer that are South Africa's great want. It may be impossible to initiate such a scheme as that by which Canada has drawn to herself, and still continues to draw, the foundations for a splendid people ; but unquestionably, by whatever means South Africa can secure a share of the now dispersing British agriculturists, the outlay and trouble will be well repaid.

The notion of cheap food will not die out in people's mind, although the agitation is not parallel with the Repeal of the Corn Laws. The basis is as different as our meadows and downs are to the kopjes and 'thirsts.' The points are these : (1) The position of no country is sound where three-quarters of its wheat must come from abroad ; (2) The farmers say the present high railway rates and cost of transport prevent them growing wheat at a profit ; (3) Sir James Sivewright says it would not pay Government to carry wheat at a lower rate ; (4) If Government shows a surplus of half a million there is evidence to prove that these rates are taxing the food-stuffs of the people ; (5) Famines must be expected where a population increases at the rate it does in South Africa, necessitating the purchase of corn from over sea. The question therefore is, Which is cheaper for Government—to lower the railway rates or for production to be cheapened in other ways ?

CHAPTER II.

MARKETS AND TRADING.

THE subject of irrigation is already to the fore as a distinct factor in South African economy. Already large schemes are in hand, and the necessity is so generally acknowledged that no man in his senses would dream of taking up land without trying to put water upon it.

Plenty of opportunities are certain to be offered for persons of enterprise and skill—and not without experience—to combat this initial difficulty in South Africa. In another decade we may see the vast reservoirs of old lakes restored by saving the flood-waters, which so long have rushed unheeded to the sea. All along their banks will be a deep fringe of beautiful trees—the Lombardy poplar, the blue gum, eucalyptus, and cedar, while great stretches of the gaunt and horrible Karoo will smile with perpetual verdure under the cloudless sky of Africa's longest drought. Yet a second difficulty remains, the solution of which rests not alone with engineers, and scarcely at all with the farmers. There are golden opportunities for large capitalists possessed of a certain knowledge and experience belonging only to the old world. These are the things needed in South Africa now that the mediæval existence of the Boers is passing away.

The *supply* of raw produce is only half the battle—the *demand* is the other half ; but the connection of the two halves is necessary to a successful whole. Obviously a great deal of the world's health and wealth depends on the regulation and supply of markets. The importance of this branch of trade is nowhere more clearly seen than in London, where we have nearly 5,000,000 of human beings dependent for their daily bread upon supplies drawn from the furthest corners of the globe. It is the great miracle of modern times, the finding bread which these may eat, for it includes and, in fact, accounts for all the marvels of electricity and steam, of cold storage, and rapid transit, which the age has produced. The business merely begins with the farmer or producer of primary products ; the rest is carried on entirely by commercial activity—an activity which gains control of supplies and disposes of them precisely as, where, and when they are needed with almost mechanical regularity.

The tendency of the farmer is to aim direct at the consumer, and doubtless whenever he achieves this there is a momentary triumph. It is more profitable to the producer and cheaper for the consumer to get rid of the middleman. This is our complaint at home, where the middleman has been given unlimited power. Yet we shall see an instance in Africa of the farmer being practically helpless, and without the power of providing a market, where the middleman is absent.

The question is, Can farmers provide markets for themselves ? It can at least be safely asserted that they cannot do so independently of the ruling conditions of trade, and to understand and provide for these conditions requires such strenuous application and

great activity as very few farmers would feel equal to bestowing after their usual day's work.

If we look at the case of tea, wool, sugar, hides, cheese, wine, etc., we shall find markets a still more intricate subject, as these products pass through some kind of manufacturing before being offered to the consumer. They also acquire a keeping power which entirely alters their commercial status. Then, the factory necessary for their preparation may not be on the immediate spot where the commodities are produced. In this case it is inevitable that the middleman steps in. He is the only positive trader, since he merely buys to sell again, without adding in any way to the goods for which he merely finds a market. Trade in the abstract is the finding of markets.

When the total commercial ignorance of the Boers is considered, it will not be difficult to understand that farming in their hands was not a lucrative business.

‘ In matters of commerce, the fault of the Dutch
Is the giving too little, and asking too much.’

In other words, their maxim is to sell little and sell dear, whereas the whole tendency of modern trade is exactly in the contrary direction—the growing of enormous crops and the sale of double quantities for two-thirds of the price, and the reaping of profits by organizing, co-operating, and cheapening methods.

A glance at the changed conditions of Covent Garden Market will prove this. The extremely choice and costly products have not greatly increased in supply, but the second and even third-class products have trebled and quadrupled. Whereas at one time men found it most profitable to grow small quantities of

singularly perfect fruits, they now send to market large quantities of first-rate goods ; in fact, they cater for the millions whose means are simply comfortable, instead of for the few people of vast fortunes. The same rule applies to all trade, though it may not always be so apparent, and it is only another manifestation of the strength and power of the democracy. There will always be a few choice articles which reap top prices, but the serious question is the disposal of the surplus at a small profit.

No one should attempt farming without considering this matter—how the steady demand of the masses may be made a basis for trade. While admitting that the calling of agriculture partakes of the nature of art and science, it is impossible to ignore the commercial side of it. No man succeeds at it to-day who is not a good man of business. If this is admitted in the mother-country, where good local markets are within every farmer's reach, and where commercial information can be readily obtained, how much more must it apply in new territories where communication is difficult, and where, owing to the size of the farms and the scarcity of population, products collect in bulk at certain seasons of the year, far in excess of local requirements !

Hitherto the part of the middleman has been played by the few pedlars or traders who act independently, or through the large merchant houses on the coast—the export, import, and forwarding agents.

The business done by these large houses is enormous. Not only does it consist of shipping machinery for mines, galvanized iron for houses, railway stock, but also food-stuffs of all descriptions—mealies, corn, flour, and tinned products, besides clothing. And when it is

considered that the great continent is unprovided with manufactories, and that almost everything that is made comes through somebody's hands from over the sea, the vast extent of the import trade must be sufficiently clear. What they most desire is an increase in the export trade. Wool, mohair, hides, and feathers are, after all, limited. They ship out agricultural implements, and everything an up-country farmer can require, from the hat on his head to the pot in which he cooks his food; and in return they take from him wool, mohair, wattle-bark, or whatever else he may have for sale, and he stands in their debit for coffee, sugar, galvanized iron, ploughs, saddlery, or whatever else he may require. The matter is worked by agents, the great shipping houses at the ports backing their agents with credit to a certain amount. Here steps in a curious feature in South African life—the trader's store.

The business done by traders is incalculable, and what has the appearance of merely a very indifferent village shop often has lying behind it enormous financial returns. It is said that the business is not so profitable as it was fifteen years ago, and that therefore many traders are becoming farmers. It is not unusual to combine store-keeping with farming, and the practice is very convenient. Very few traders start on their own account, and nearly all of them are connected with the large shipping houses in Port Elizabeth. These firms consider the application of men who announce that they are prepared to take goods up-country and open trade with them. The firm agrees to allow the intending trader a certain quantity of goods on credit for a fixed period of three, four, or six months. The trader conveys the goods as far by rail as he can, and then hires

or purchases a waggon or cart, and 'treks' away to the district where he intends to open trade, and for which he has obtained a license. He will probably meet with customers by the way. Kaffirs will offer him karrosses or horns, or, it may be, feathers or hides; these he takes in exchange for coffee, sugar, matches, cloth, and looking-glasses. He also stops at the various farms, where he is sure to be welcome, because white men are scarce, and to the lonely Englishman on the high veldt he brings newspapers and a breath of the old world; for these the trader has groceries as well as shirts, saddlery, etc., and perhaps he takes the orders for agricultural implements, if he has not brought them with him.

For the Boers he has a distinct class of goods—large cuckoo bonnets, which are worn by the Dutch 'vrows,' and are called 'kappies,' though anything less like a cap could hardly be imagined; big cloth hats for the men, with wide, flapping brims; tobacco of the country, which is an acquired taste; coffee of a cheap quality; and extraordinary cotton prints, with the largest possible patterns, which are turned out in our factories 'made for South Africa.' Not the least curious part of the trader's equipment is an assortment of sweets, which are also 'made for South Africa.' Each sweet is about as large as a florin, and quite twice as thick; on it is printed a motto in Dutch, generally of an amorous nature. No Boer concludes a bargain or settles an account without a present of some sort, and a few of these sweets are added gratis. No doubt amongst a people whose language is elementary, and not remarkable for elegance, these sweets may fill up interludes in the conversation, and convey hints in moments of hesitation or perplexity. Their popularity is immense,

and no one would go trading with the Boers without a hundredweight or so of these coined expressions of endearment.

When the trader has disposed of his goods, he finds his waggon has been gradually filled with hides, horns, skins, or feathers, in exchange; that he has besides a handsome sum in cash, and probably a good list of orders for ironware to remit to the house in Port Elizabeth. It may be readily imagined that the trader's life is a pleasant one. He can travel as fast and as far as he pleases, he is welcome wherever he goes, and he is able to take stock of a country concerning which, perhaps, very little is generally known.


At the same time, the very freedom of the life constitutes its chief danger. Very often he passes beyond the last police camp, and arrives in a region where, if there is any law or morals, he makes the law himself, and the morals too. He may win concessions of land from chiefs or kings; he may assist them with his rifle in their wars, and be handsomely paid in ivory or native gold. Then, the temptation is a great one to barter spirits or ammunition or guns. Sometimes he may acquire more goods than his own waggon will carry, and therefore he hires Kaffir transport, and cheats the simple Kaffir as to the weight he puts on his waggon. If this is found out afterwards, it may fare badly with him.

But to press thus far afield belongs only to the adventurous spirits. Very often the trader is content to open a store in some convenient central locality, and work up a custom for himself amongst the farmers, Boers, and Kaffirs on the margin of civilization.

The opportunity is then afforded him for a little judicious money-lending. This branch of 'trading'

belongs especially to the Jew trader. With Englishmen finance of this description is acquired; but the Jew sucks in the knowledge with his mother's milk. When we consider how many farmers in Africa have had to make every sixpence of capital which they have laid out on irrigation and fencing, etc., the field which is open to the money-lender in Africa will be seen to be a large one. Apart from this, the Boer sees no harm in being in debt. In matters of finance he is more incapable than the Kaffir; indeed, the Kaffir, by dint of rubbing shoulders with Jews, and learning by many severe lessons, threatens to become in time able to out-Jew any ordinary Shylock. The Boer, partly through innate vanity, falls an easy prey to the traders or store-keepers, who make a practice of getting him on to their books. They approach him as 'a friend.' They pet and fondle him, and persuade him to buy things which they know he cannot pay for, yet which he is too proud to admit he cannot afford.

The Boer, meantime, has inherited his peculiar view of the trader, and of course adheres to it. He remembers that his father told him how, under the Dutch East India Company, the Boers were forbidden to trade, and all stores were kept by the company. This was a grievance which rankled in the Boers' minds. Probably in those days they wanted to trade, but whether they did or not, they resented a prohibition, which set a limit to that precious liberty which they had done so much to gain. It therefore became a righteous duty to cheat the Government, and thieve from the store as much as possible. The last thing they would ever do was to pay a debt incurred at a store, and the amount they owed was a thing to glory



in. If the matter were pressed upon them, they disputed it inch by inch by any lie or subterfuge they could lay hold of. Occasionally a compromise would be arrived at, when neither party could move any more, by which the Boer agreed to pay a certain percentage, receiving a present in grateful acknowledgment, perhaps a gold watch, or a set of harness, or something else with which he could cut a dash, and which he could flourish as a trophy won from the tyrannical sons of Belial in the official ranks.

It is from this ingrained habit of their forefathers that many of the Boers to-day are averse to paying their debts, and commonly demand a present whenever they settle an account.

But another practice, and one which leads to a thousand complications, is the readiness with which the Boers mortgage their land. They will be just as secret about the mortgage as they are open and defiant about the debt. It has usually been brought about by one of two causes—the diminished returns upon land and a dislike to appear poorer than their fathers, or else to a land hunger, which makes them vie with one another in the purchase of wide territories.

There were very few direct free grants of land made in South Africa, and most of the land was originally bought at a public auction, starting with an upset price. As virgin soil, its yields were tremendous, and in the days of slave labour, and while Cape wines found favour in Europe, many of the properties in Cape Colony were capable of standing the drain of a mortgage. Since those days the soil has diminished in value, and to get any return from it heavy manuring is essential. Labour has risen in price, and skilled

labour is difficult to obtain. The old art of wine-making is lost. Sooner than admit the truth by cutting down their expenses, and bestirring themselves to overcome the acknowledged difficulties of the case, the Boers have quietly borrowed cash from the handy Israelite.

Had this money been invested in improvements, in stock, in machinery, in acquiring skill, and so put into the land, things might yet have righted themselves. But, unfortunately, it went too often in harness and horses and traps, or was frittered away in idle extravagance, so that when the end of it came, more assistance had to be obtained.

Some instances there are of men who have purchased their holdings upon mortgage equal to the entire price. This arose from the desperately insolvent state of fathers who had sons to provide for. They gave the younger sons waggons and spans, their rifles and some ammunition, and, thus equipped, the lads trekked away, and bought land in new territories upon mortgage for its entire value. Without a shilling to invest in improvements, they could only squat on the land, paying their instalments of interest out of the produce of their herds. Fortune has favoured some of these Boers, for, by the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley and gold on the Rand, they have in many instances disposed of their property for treble the original price. Thus they have been able to discharge their debts, and trek with the remainder to take up fresh land cheaper and further from civilization. It also happens that gold or diamonds may be found on a Boer's farm. In this case he realizes a large sum, and then, with that touching devotion to his own kind which is one of his noblest traits, he

is sure to remember the old people at home in their straitened circumstances, and transmit some of his 'pile' back to the old colony.

The chance that a usurer looks for is a Boer who will borrow money on his land at an extortionate rate of interest, which, as it is drawn from him in small monthly instalments, does not appear to him in its true amount. There are mortgages held upon land where the interest is running to 70, 80, or even 100 per cent., and yet the Boer is too ignorant to know the amount of his indebtedness. The land is the fact that he sees. He knows that he is very poor in cash, but he looks at his morgens,* and feels rich. Some day—when it suits his purpose—the usurer will foreclose. Then the wretched Boer will be forced to trek. He will be given a certain sum to 'clear out,' for the moment has come when the laying of a fresh railway, or the discovery of a mine, or the improvements on neighbouring land, will have raised the value of the property, and this unearned increment must be pocketed by the man who of all others has had least to do with it.

It may happen that the usurer, if he is a trader, will have obtained a grant of land somewhere in N'gami-land or Namaqualand, and want someone to occupy it. The Boer is therefore made to trek, and if it is a case of purchase, then he is given money to purchase the land *also on mortgage*; and then he squats again even more broken-spirited and unhappy than before.

The mortgage, however, is better than the debt to the trader. This last can torment and harass the unhappy Boer in a thousand inconceivable ways. He keeps always hanging over him the fearful threat of sum-

* A morgen is equal to about 2 acres.

mons for debt. Oddly enough, this is a disgrace which a Boer would do anything and everything to avoid. They are proud of having debts, but it cuts their pride in its tenderest part to be shown up as unable to pay.

The 'friend' no sooner has him well in hand than he proceeds to bully and assert his power. He sends to him and demands the best ox out of his span, and, grieving sadly, the Boer dare not refuse; or he wants transport ridden on a certain day, and perforce the Boer himself must do it. There is a tree with the best peaches on it, which the 'friend' in former days has often been invited to enjoy, and therefore has good reason to remember. A message is brought that every peach on that tree must at once be sent to the store, and it is done. Perhaps before things get too bad the Boer hopes to make a little headway. He gets a little piece of land in tilth, and sows it with oats. No sooner are they fit to cut, than a message comes. Oat-hay is wanted immediately. And so it goes on, till all the courage and spirit of the Boer is broken and gone, and his kindness turned to a furtive, creeping dislike, and a distrust of human nature in general. It seems probable that, owing to a variety of causes, the old system of trading will be superseded. Usurious practices will probably be dealt with by the Legislature, and if so, the benefit to the farming industry will be undoubted.

Still, it is by means of these traders that the resources of the up-country districts were brought down to the railways; and the time is still distant before light railways will connect the extreme districts with the main lines. There are two things which would act beneficially in curbing the propensities to fraud and

usury on the part of these agents. One would be an Act dealing with usury, probably on a scheme similar to that of the Deccan Relief Act, which was found necessary in India some years ago ; the other would be a law dealing with fraudulent bankruptcies.

The fraudulent bankrupt is a difficult person to catch in Africa, and what with loss of time from attending to business and the necessary legal expenses, the Port Elizabeth merchant too often lets the matter alone. Yet it is these shippers who suffer most severely from the practice, and very often it is a trick deliberately played off upon them by their up-country agent.

As has been already stated, it is easy to obtain credit in goods, for the merchants are always anxious to extend their business, and there is at present no other means of reaching the distant parts of the colony ; therefore the agent starts with two or three hundred pounds' worth of goods. Once out of reach, he can convert the goods into cash in a very short time. Perhaps the easiest way is by starting a sale and disposing of the whole at less than Port Elizabeth cost price ; a very injurious practice, affecting legitimate trade adversely, and thus inflicting a double loss on the merchant-shippers. Then, with the cash in hand, he can readily pay his two or three months' instalments of interest, having at the same time sufficient capital to start speculating in the mining stocks of the Rand. These men are the wildest gamblers. Perhaps they win, but perhaps they lose. Then there is nothing for it but bankruptcy, after which they are, of course, free to start again. But in many cases even the bankruptcy is a fraud, and after it is over the agent decamps to some other seaport, and, under an alias, applies perhaps

to the very same firm; and as the partner at Durban was not at Port Elizabeth, and did not see him, he is accepted once more.

Jews are reckoned especially skilful in this business, and while admitting the immense services which the Hebrews have rendered to every branch of our commerce, and the unquestionable loyalty of many of them to our Queen and country, it is to be regretted that they allow the bond of their religion to be a cloak which they cast over the malpractices of their 'co-religionists.' There are three orders of Jews. The first is a man who will get his price and his profit, but having got it is content. There is another, who is not satisfied unless he is inflicting loss on someone less astute than himself. There is the third class, whose sole object in life, whose only pleasure, is to fasten upon the industry of another man, and not to leave go until the last drop of blood is sucked dry. This causes them the only amusement they are capable of enjoying; the humour of witnessing the suffering they can inflict is exquisite.

For these last Africa offers a splendid field, and the unhappy Boer is fair sport; but the large merchant houses suffer also, for the resources of these rascals are astonishing. In the matter of an alias, their audacity is inconceivable. Knowing that Scottish names stand well everywhere, they do not hesitate to assume some of the finest of the old patronymics. It is an experience not easily forgotten when a genuine Highlander is called upon for the first time in his life to address as 'Mr. Cameron' or 'Mr. Hamilton' a man whose accent is that of Central Europe or Whitechapel, and whose oily ringlets, pronounced nose, and protruding eyes and lips stamp him at once as a son of Abraham. The

only remedy for the abuse of the alias by a class of rogues would be for the Government to appoint a Public Prosecutor for fraudulent bankruptcy, or for fraud in general, paying all expenses, and rendering it penal for a man to change his name without registering the same and leaving his photograph for identification.

This is the case for the up-country trade and for goods which, like wool and mohair and feathers, require a connection with the shippers of the seaports. But these are by no means the only products of African farming. 'The best fruit in the world,' 'the best climate for wine,' 'the finest country for cattle' (whether dairy or stock)—these are the answers returned by experts to only a few questions respecting farming interests in South Africa. But these products require local markets and a class of well-equipped middlemen. In Johannesburg, in Port Elizabeth, in Durban, it may safely be said that the middleman, as we understand him in London, does not exist. There are the railways and telegraphs to hasten or arrest supplies, but the cool chambers, the sorters, packers, graders, and the skill which studies and cultivates the taste of a market, is entirely lacking.

The habit of most people is to abuse the middleman, and to credit him with a number of tricks whereby he robs the public on one side and the producers on the other. Of course he has no sentiment in the matter; but it is difficult to see how business can be carried on without him. It is impossible for men who are managing mines to go in search of fresh provisions; and it is equally impossible for farmers to leave their farms and go in search of customers. The lack of a middleman results in this: first, that products lie and

rot where they have grown, while the consumer is taught by privations, unwillingly incurred, how much he can do without; then that the farmer ceases to produce and the consumer ceases to want.


An energetic middleman is not the ephemeral being who toils not, neither does he spin, according to some people's representation; he invests very considerably in his business, and has a great deal at stake. To begin with, he must have suitable stores, and a good staff of packers, sorters, and salesmen; then he must advertise his business. After this he must be continually educating the public in some fresh want; introducing a new product at less than cost price to begin with, because he knows of farmers who have fields full of this special article, and he must teach the public to want it before business can come of it; or else he will have to stand a steady loss for some time on really high-class goods which he sets forth as something superlative at a very high figure, to which the public is not accustomed. It is a remarkable feature in South Africa that it is extremely difficult to get anything very choice. A lot of the best peaches will be tumbled together with a lot of poor or half-rotten ones, bad grapes mixed with good ones, stale oranges or guavas thrown together with fresh ones. It is just the same with the wool; sandy, scabby wool is mixed with the best fleeces, and sewn up in the same bale. The wine is perhaps the greatest sufferer. There is actually a process of grading which is simply retrograding.* In a word, the aim of the market has been at mediocrity of quality. Except in the cockpit of Africa—Johannesburg—there is no longer a demand on the part of the public for good, better, best of anything.

* See chapter on Viticulture.

The Nemesis is a tendency to the bad, prices being maintained only by a restriction of supplies.

In Capetown the Malay is both collector and distributor. He is far from possessing either taste, or nicety, or cleanliness, and his notion of trade is to starve a market, with the result that, in the first city of the land of fruits, good fresh fruit is a rarity, and so costly that only a few rich people can afford it. He has long ruled the garden trade and the fish market, and is now laying his hands upon the dairy business.

If the large towns are thus badly catered for, the condition of lesser centres can be imagined. The effect of a season of drought has to be met by officialism, but local scarcity, everywhere and always, can best be prevented by the natural and unfettered agencies of trade, even in a semi-savage country. The grip of barbarism is but loosened in Africa; there are no remains of ancient civilization to soften existence, and the comforts of modern civilization are still a long way from the life of the continent. But the first step towards ameliorating the inevitable harsh conditions of life would be the introduction and establishment of a capable, well-organized class of middlemen. Come it must, later if not sooner. Meantime there is plenty of capital and enterprise in Great Britain needing direction. It would be a thousand pities for the wants of South Africa to be supplied from any other quarter—even from Germany. Moreover, it is impossible to forget that the best intelligence of the city of London has been exercised for centuries upon this subject, which in South Africa is left to the makeshift Coolie or Malay.



CHAPTER III.

LAND PURCHASE.

IT is far better and safer for an emigrant to purchase Government land, or become a tenant by license or quit-rent upon Government land, than to attempt dealings with companies or agents. The principal Land Act is No. 15, 1887. Under this law all Crown land is put up to public auction, previously advertised by the Surveyor-General. The sale is held at the office of the Civil Commissioner in the district on which the land is situated. It is put up at an upset price, and knocked down to the highest bidder. At the expiration of six months one-tenth must be paid, another tenth at the expiration of the year. Then the remaining four-fifths is put on mortgage to Government at 4 per cent. The purchaser has to pay off in certain fixed proportions the outstanding mortgage. He may pay off by instalments from time to time; no instalment to be less than £50.

It was under this Act that a good deal of mischief was done by land companies.

By a later Act, 26 of 1891, land is put up to lease at public auction for periods varying from one to five years. This Bill has been very recently improved by an amendment allowing the lessees to purchase the land leased out of hand during the continuation of the lease. This

measure is peculiarly adapted to the large waterless districts of Namaqualand, Kenhard, and Carnarvon. It was found that many men who had leased land and spent capital upon reservoirs and other improvements were outbid at the end of their leases. They are therefore offered the option of purchase price upon the value of their leases.

Another Act, No. 37 of 1882, was passed with a view to encourage *la petite culture*. Under this Act (which is the one prevailing in the Cape Flats) the purchaser applies for a specified piece of land in extent not greater than 500 acres nor less than eight. The application is brought before a local board which assesses the value. It will be seen that the essential feature is the knowledge by the applicant of the land he intends purchasing. The applicant, if accepted, receives a license from Government for five years at a license rent, calculated at 5 per cent. of the value, and is also compelled to reside personally upon the land within six months from the time of purchase for at least three years, and to cultivate at least one-twentieth of the acres within two years. At the expiration of his five years' license, if he has observed the conditions, he receives a quit-rent grant, the quit-rent being equal to the license paid, which is the same thing under a different name, with this difference, that he can redeem the quit-rent by a twenty years' purchase. The land is not transferable during the five years unless a title to the land has been provided during that period.

The primary object of this Act is to set aside, where deemed advisable, the system of sale by auction, and to offer suitable farms to persons not possessed of other land, upon condition of personal occupation, upon com-

paratively easy terms both as to payment and purchase-money.

This is by far the most reasonable manner in which to secure a holding, and many men upon first landing at the Cape could not do better than take up a small acreage and remain on it five years, learning the language and ways of the new country. Under any circumstances it would be as well for every new-comer to inquire where the next sales of Government land are to be held, and, having ascertained the Act under which they are to be sold, to go to the locality and make himself acquainted with that part of the country. Certainly the worst plan possible is to buy land in South Africa before leaving England, or to become bound in any way to any land company, no matter how advantageous their terms may appear.

Quite recently the Colonial Government has arranged for a number of small holdings to be sold upon easy terms on the land below Capetown, called the Cape Flats. The idea has been to encourage small capitalists, and the opportunity has been eagerly embraced by a good class of industrious Germans. Fruit and vegetables are the staple products, but up to the present time the difficulty of transport has militated severely against these small holders. There is no doubt that an excellent opportunity is offered for intelligent market-gardeners who understand the supply of markets as well as the growth of products, and who are able to take out with them from this country £1,000.

With regard to mineral rights upon land in Bechuana-land, Griqualand West, and Cape Colony, the law is somewhat uncertain, and depends upon the date of the original deeds. Very early title-deeds appear to

have no reference to the reservation of mineral rights to the Crown. From 1813 to 1856 the reservation is explicit upon *precious stones, gold, and silver*, but no mention is made of coal, iron, or other minerals. In 1860 there is an Act providing that no land known to contain *valuable minerals* shall be considered waste lands of the Crown for purposes of sale. In 1881 a clause appears for the first time referring to all *ores, metals, minerals and precious stones*. The provision is so remarkable that no one should purchase land in Cape Colony without considering its possible effects :

‘That the rights of the proprietor shall not extend to any deposits of ores, metals, minerals, or precious stones which may at any time be discovered on the land hereby granted. The right of mining and searching for ores, metals, minerals or precious stones is reserved to the Government, or to any person authorized by it, and compensation for any damages which may be sustained by the proprietor from the working of mines or search for ores, metals, minerals, or precious stones shall be settled by mutual agreement, or, failing such agreement, by appraisers appointed in manner provided in the second clause hereof.’

Therefore Government has the right of search upon any man’s farm bought under this Act, and these terms may either be advantageous or the reverse.

In Bechuanaland great discontent is felt and expressed in many districts on account of the mineral laws. Commissioners have been called, and great have been the heart-burnings at the inscrutable judgments of these commissioners. In the Mier country all mineral rights are awarded to a Mr. Carstenstein, ‘subject to all laws and regulations in force in Bechuanaland.’ On the

Cape Railway grant, containing 6,000 square miles, the Cape Government retains all rights. On the second railway grant, also a territory of 6,000 square miles, the mineral rights are reserved to the Bechuanaland Railway Company.

No man, therefore, need think that in merely purchasing land he is buying a gold-mine for himself. He will do well if he secures the iron, coal, asbestos, salt, etc., which may be under his holding; but, except in the title-deeds of a few of the very oldest of the farmers in Cape Colony, there is no doubt that the diamonds, gold, and silver do not belong to the farmers, and are not included in the purchase.

Rates for the maintenance of roads are sometimes very heavy, but there are no poor rates or education rates. Transfer dues amount to only 4 per cent. The expenses of survey are sometimes charged at the rate of one-twentieth of the purchase price.

Chiefly owing to the custom prevalent throughout South Africa of putting land up to sale at public auction, a great deal of land has been turned to speculative account by land companies. It has also raised the price of land to quite unreasonable figures, so that there is no subject on which it is so difficult to obtain information as the true value of land. We are accustomed to regard the value of land as precisely occupying a part of the outlay for which a man believes he sees his way to profits above the current bank rate. But in South Africa there are chances and possibilities of a kind scarcely understood in this country, such as the discovery of minerals, or the opening of a railway, or the starting of Government irrigation works, which men who have little or no interest in primary products

regard as values to be added as unearned increments to the land. The land-hunger of the Boers, and their absolute ignorance of finance, makes them reckless purchasers. There are immense inequalities in the nature of the land itself which are not apparent to a stranger. For instance, the old cornlands of the Western Provinces have been exhausted by bad farming, therefore the original prices given for them are no criterion of their present value. Much of the land in the Stellenbosch district, which was the centre of rich vineyards in the time of Simon v. der Stelle, is depreciated, partly by the ravages of blight, and partly by the unpopularity of Cape wines. In parts of the Eastern Provinces a scramble has taken place to secure land, and prices have been rushed up to absurd figures for virgin soil irrigated by a company which draws an annual water-rate. Twenty four pounds a morgen is sometimes given for this land; but however good the quality of the land, this outlay represents a dangerously high capital to be invested in primary products. The only way to arrive at any fair estimate of the proper value of a farm is to have seen something of the local possibilities, advantages, and disadvantages, prior to purchasing land.

There are very few parts of Africa where the small capitalist can make his way. Sir Charles Mills, in speaking of Cape Colony, said that the capital necessary over and above the purchase price of a farm was £1,000, and probably this would be found the lowest possible estimate. The cost of labour is insignificant compared with other colonies. A Kaffir will work for £1 a month with his rations, and his labour is quite good enough, except in the wine and fruit industry,

where skilled labour is essential. The greatest drawback to an English settler is, that his total ignorance of colonial necessities will probably cost him very dear before he has bought his experience. Then, water-storage is required upon most of the land, the cost of which varies considerably according to localities, and may be any sum from £100 to £1,000. This outlay would, of course, be taken into consideration at the outset, for it would be simple madness for a man to purchase any farm, knowing that he had not the capital wherewith to place water upon it. That emigrants have inadvertently done this in the past is undoubtedly one reason of the failure and bankruptcy of many farmers who have settled in South Africa.

Men have bought land where they have had private knowledge that water could be found inexpensively, and, having expended every shilling of their capital in storage and irrigation works, have then been obliged to sell out. They have generally realized a profit, but such a proceeding is speculation, and cannot come under the head of farming. The genuine farmer is a man with taste or inclination for a special line of farming, and should choose his land accordingly, remembering at the same time to leave sufficient capital after the purchase price has been paid to meet all emergencies and requirements. The districts best suited for cattle-farming are British Bechuanaland and Griqualand West; for cereals, the Transvaal and the Western Provinces of Cape Colony; for fruit and vegetables, parts of the Eastern Provinces and the Cape Peninsula. There are also valleys where the alluvial deposit is very rich, as, for instance, in the districts near Tulbah, where fruit and vegetables would grow excellently were irriga-

tion provided. For wine, the Cape Peninsula and a good part of Cape Colony between the Karoo and the sea-coast; for sheep, the Karoo and the Eastern and Western Provinces; for ostriches, the Thorn Veldt; for goats, the Thorn Veldt, where the thorns are not of the kind to destroy the fleeces, and high ground generally; for mules, the Western Provinces in particular; for horses, the high ground between Steynsburch and the Aliwal North. Dairy-farming may be undertaken almost anywhere, provided the local difficulties respecting cattle diseases and their treatment, and the manufacture of butter, are thoroughly understood.

The capital necessary depends upon the style of farming, and so does the acreage. Allowance must be made also for rises in the value of land. For instance, the following are the figures given by a farmer who settled in Bechuanaland five or six years ago:

	£
A grant of Government land, 6,000 acres - - -	250
For stocking farm, and building a little brick house, etc., and cheap irrigation - - - -	500
Two Kaffir boys paid 10s. a month, fed on mealies and an occasional sheep or goat (per annum) -	18
Quit-rent and taxes for police protection (per annum)	15

These figures can on no account be trusted in the present day, and for these reasons: the best land is appropriated, and the completion of the railway has raised the price of land. Where £2,000 would have been ample capital for a large cattle-farm, including purchase price, in the present day a man would require £4,000 or £5,000, and it would be very hazardous to take up that class of farming with less. He would also be farming in competition with men who bought better land at a cheaper rate.

In the Karoo, land which is dry or waterless may be purchased very cheaply, but the difficulty of finding water is considerable, and the rivers which supply flood waters at a certain season, and then run dry, are expensive to dam for storage purposes.

The following figures, though relating to some twelve years back, probably hold good in the present day, as the values in this particular district have not altered much. The farm had been held by a Boer for twenty years :

		£
Farm and buildings (about 2,000 morgens)	- -	400
For buying stock, etc.	- - - - -	300
For irrigation and water-storage in the course of		
twelve years, about	- - - - -	1,000

In six years the stock, which began with a few sheep and the inevitable span, had increased, and the profits were laid out upon ostriches and a good class of dairy stock.

The standard size of a farm in Cape Colony is from 1,000 to 3,000 morgens (a morgen being about 2 acres).

It must be evident that farms of this size require considerable capital, but the probability is that before long land in the neighbourhood of large towns will be divided into smaller holdings. Whether it will be cheaper at this price depends upon the facilities afforded by markets, and the chances of irrigation offered by Government works wherever these may be established. In certain localities an attempt has been made to introduce the small capitalist or working man, but the success has never been such as to justify the recommendation of any scheme of the kind. Men have been induced to emigrate with £300. Too frequently

the land company or some colonization syndicate has extracted the whole sum, and left the emigrant penniless. There are cases where these small capitalists have succeeded. Some Scots, who were settled near East London on small holdings, made a living and something more; but it was a very hard living, and after a few years the land was exhausted, and the men sold the holdings and took their savings to the North.

Two points must never be allowed to rest in uncertainty wherever land is purchased in South Africa, especially where the vendor is a private individual or a company: the riparian rights must be clearly established as belonging to the land purchased and included in the purchase, and this is even a critical matter where the use of flood waters is concerned; the other is to obtain possession of undisputed title-deeds. This last is frequently a matter of some difficulty in the Transvaal.

CHAPTER IV.

TREKKING IN BECHUANALAND.

IN giving an account of my 'trek' in Bechuanaland, it is impossible to avoid speaking in the first person ; but as a narrative style is more suited to the general style of this book, and also perhaps less wearisome to the reader, I shall beg his permission to drop the first person as soon as I have concluded with my trek.

It was towards the end of June that I proceeded to Taungs by train, and found Mr. Dumaresque Manning at the station to meet me. It was pitch dark when I climbed out of the railway-carriage on to the veldt, for the whole train could not draw up at the small siding dignified by the name of a station.

After the usual scrimmage to find baggage in the dark, I found myself with two strangers, who were Dutch, and Mr. Manning, crammed into a Cape cart, to which I was told there were four horses attached, but I could not see them. Lastly, the driver scrambled in and seized the reins, the lash of a long whip flew out overhead, and, with howls and yells, away we plunged through the blackness over stock and stone, sometimes encountering rocks or other impediments, over which we banged and crashed in a way that would have shot me out of the cart had I not been tightly wedged in by my hold-all and a bundle of blankets and karrosses.

The inn at Taungs was my first experience of an up-country hotel, and I am not likely to forget it. My bedroom was in a low shed partitioned into narrow sections. It had a window, but no blind, only a piece of calico tacked provisionally across it. There was a cracked mirror about the size of an octavo page, of such cheap glass that all my features looked awry, a cracked basin and a small jug, a chest of drawers which stuck and jammed, and a chair.

This was the best room in the inn, and Mr. Manning was anxious to impress on me that I could rely on having clean sheets, as though that were a great rarity—a fact which I came to appreciate later on. After I had done what I could to tidy myself independently of the contents of my cabin-trunk, which could not be brought in the Cape cart, I was preparing to find my way across the square outspan to the inn in search of dinner, when a ragged Kaffir boy, with one eye and a dirty old felt hat in which he had stuck an ostrich-plume, came and asked me for the ‘Engelsman’s hair-brushes.’ I went back to hunt in the chest of drawers, and found two unmistakably English hairbrushes of the kind affected by the male gender. Owing to this incident I discovered that I was occupying the best room in the inn, which Mr. Manning had vacated for me.

Then I crossed to the inn. In the room, dignified by the name of the *table-d’hôte* room, I found a table spread with a well-used cloth, covered with large black flies. These flies were in everything. They were in the mawkish soup and the indescribable stew, and I seemed to find them among the plums of the tinned plum-pudding. They crawled over one’s hands and

face, and ran into one's mouth with one's food, or whenever it was opened to utter a sound.

The next morning, after a cup of coffee and a bath had been brought me by the one-eyed Kaffir who wore the ostrich-feather, I dressed myself for the last time within four walls, and reflected that henceforward I was to spend many weeks in which baths and looking-glasses would find no place.

The sun was shining brightly as I crossed the square, and I found both Mr. Manning and Mr. Covernton busy rolling up blankets and karrosses, and preparing to start after breakfast.

The prospect I looked out upon was a wide plain which rose and fell in gradual slopes so extensive in area that their actual elevation was scarcely noticeable. On a rising ground about a mile to the right was the tin-roofed house of the magistrate. Standing by itself was another tin building, the newly erected chemist's shop, and an inn halfway between them. These were the only white men's dwellings in Taungs; the rest were the native huts occupying the high land on the extreme left.

I was told that a fortnight before a surgeon had come out from England upon seeing an advertisement for a Government surgeon for the Taungs district. He intended to be married on the strength of the appointment; but he no sooner arrived at Taungs and saw the place, than he fled from it in horror. 'But that,' said a resident who told me the story, 'was only because he was an Englishman, and fresh to South Africa.'

Round the store, which was part of the inn, Kaffirs were huddled in their blankets, for the wind was keen in spite of the sun. They were bargaining and wrangling

and buying threepennyworths of odds and ends, over which there was a good deal of excitement.

While we sat at breakfast—and to the flies were added the attentions of two badly-broken pointers, who persisted in trying to lick my plate—there came a noise of grinding and thundering and the lowing of cattle, and, looking through the window, I saw a waggon drawn by a span of ten very handsome Kaffir oxen, whose great horns seemed to meet across each other.

‘That is my waggon,’ said Mr. Manning, ‘and as I am going to inquire about some taxes in another direction to your trek to-morrow, perhaps you will come with me, and make your start from here on Monday.’

I was especially glad to go upon this expedition, as the outspan that night would be by one of the underground reservoirs common in this country. The journey was about twelve miles the other side of the Hartz River. The country was very dry except for the river; but the soil was rich, and wherever the natives had ploughed it for mealies the crops were reported to be highly satisfactory. Under irrigation (if water could be placed upon it), this soil would produce two crops in the year in place of one, as at present.


Before we reached our destination that night I had seen plenty to convince me that the natives in this location are well-to-do. Their principal ambition is to own a waggon, and live by transport-riding and cattle-dealing. This is about the laziest life possible for the men. The work in the gardens or mealie-plots is undertaken by the women. These women also thatch the huts and plaster the walls with cow-dung and the earth from the ant-hills. They may be seen carrying wood or heavy water-jars upon their heads, with the inevitable

baby strapped on to their backs. When the mother hoes the mealie-plot, the baby's head is jerked every time the hoe descends in a manner which would loosen the cerebral cord of any but a Kaffir infant.

Towards Taversiete, the meaning of which is 'the Place of the Gods,' our way lay across rough rocky ground, over which I preferred to walk, not being yet inured to the jolting of the waggon; we were, in fact, climbing an elevation or mountain, on the top of which was a plain. It was in a ravine or crevice in this mountain that the spring burst from its subterranean reservoir and worked its way from a deep pool over limestone rocks down to the level of a wide plain beyond. As I stood on the precipitous heights and looked down into the plain below, where the river meandered, I thought instinctively of the Magdalen tower and the view of the Isis.

That evening we dined under a tent upon an excellent fowl spatchcocked and roasted on the ashes. Then I retired to sleep in the waggon, while the two gentlemen occupied the tent and the boys slept by the fire.

Next morning, after breakfast, we proceeded to explore the river, walking up its bed. Mr. Manning shot two black river-ducks and some pigeons. It was not flood-time, and as the dry season was well advanced, it was quite easy to walk up the rocky bed of the river. In several pools I saw a number of small yellow fish, but I had no rod or net with me. The rocks were tangled with wild-vines, and maidenhair fern grew in every nook which contained moisture. At last, after passing several falls and climbing uphill a considerable distance, we came to the narrow cul-de-sac which terminated the ravine. Here the rocks rose about 40 feet,




and below them was a deep round pool, about 20 feet in diameter. It was reported to be very deep. Into this pool, half hidden by a tangle of bush and creepers, I could discern the sparkling trickle of a thin spurt of water, which came out of a crack in the face of the solid rock about 5 feet above the level of the pool.

Mr. Manning told me that in the rainy seasons an immense flood poured itself like a torrent over the top of the rock and sent up a column of spray which could be seen ten or twelve miles off. It struck me as very remarkable that this fall should leave no silt at all in the river-bed. The limestone rocks were everywhere white and worn, and the water as clear as crystal over them.

The next day, after Mr. Manning had concluded his business, we returned to Taungs, and then began the preparation for my 'trek.'

Mr. Manning advised me to call and see Melala, the Chief of Taungs, and therefore I started at once, accompanied by his man Stephen. Stephen was a Fingo, or gipsy, and the Bechuanas despise the Fingos; but he had had the wisdom to persuade a Bechuana lady to marry him, and this had improved his status. Still, the task of accompanying me through Taungs was not altogether congenial. We passed through the principal street, the sand of which was nearly up to my ankles, but the huts on either side were empty, save for a few children and here and there a woman grinding corn or thrashing mealies.

We passed a German trader, whose name Stephen said he did not know, though the man's face was familiar to him. He was riding on horseback the same way we were going, and he carried a Kaffir behind him



on the horse. They, too, were going to see Melala, they said. Then we meet Melala's nephew, a most conceited and idiotic specimen of a Kaffir. He was Melala's lieutenant, and a very sly-looking fellow. He affected the dandy in his dress, and was full of giggles and simpers, with a nodding white ostrich-plume set bolt upright in his hat, like the Prince of Wales's crest. He was very inquisitive, and tried to assume the condescending, therefore I told Stephen not to answer him, and walked on, Stephen following me.

Arrived at Melala's kraal, we heard a buzzing sound, like a swarm of bees. Melala was holding a Raad to consider the question of the annexation of Bechuana-land by the Cape Colony, and whether they should fight or not.

I sent a message to Melala that I had come to see him. Melala sent back to say he could not see me, his heart was sore.

This, I thought, would never do, so I sent back word that what I had come for I intended to do, and that I must see Melala.

Then I told Stephen to clear a way for me through the Raad, that I might see Melala. Stephen was nothing loath, as the determination on my part made him feel important, and he ordered the members of the Raad to make way, and shoved those who did not to one side without ceremony.

To be in the middle of three or four hundred Kaffirs is not altogether pleasant. Crowding together had made them very hot, and the scent of the Kaffir was a fresh experience to me in this pure and undiluted state. They were squatting on the ground dressed in very dirty, shabby clothes, but some wore blankets, and many of

them were smoking pipes of native tobacco. I could see a young-looking Kaffir sitting amongst a lot of grizzly-headed old ones, and made up my mind that he was Melala. He saw me, but affected to take no notice, although I saw he was very alert. I walked up to him and held out my hand, saying, 'How d'ye do, Melala? I'm pleased to see you.' This being interpreted by Stephen in a sharp military voice from behind me, Melala extended a very limp hand with an averted face, and heaved a deep sigh. I caught his hand in as strong a grasp as I could manage, and shook it once, keeping hold of it when I had done. Stephen translated that Melala's heart was sore. I threw the chief's hand from me with a jerk, and, turning round, I asked: 'What's Melala's heart sore about?' Melala possibly thought I was going away, so he began to jabber very fast to Stephen. I interrupted this by saying to Stephen that Melala must be ill, or else he would stand up when I had come to see him.

In another moment Melala was on his feet, and this time he was talking in earnest and without his usual affectation. Stephen translated to me that Melala was really *very* pleased to see me, but I had come on a bad day, for his heart was sore about the annexation. I asked, 'Why?' And the answer came naturally and simply enough: 'My father, Monkeran, fought the Boers and wounded them; and he agreed to live under the Queen of England's laws and be at peace, and now we are to be no more under the Queen of England; but our land is to be given to Mr. Rhodes, who, if he does not hate Kaffirs, loves the Boers, and already my people have not enough land as it is.'

I asked what he thought of doing, and Melala, who

is by no means warlike himself, looked round rather helplessly at the old 'braves' to right and left of him. These were his father's old warriors, who had held Taungs against the Boers and Freebooters before Sir Charles Warren came into the country. It struck me, as I looked at them, how exactly the expression in their faces matched the look I have seen in old sailors or soldiers at home! I suppose courage and the fighting spirit are always the same in black or white; but this look would never be found in the face of the volunteer, however brave he may be; it is the peculiar stamp of active service. An evil-looking Kaffir,* who wore a red nightcap, was much struck with my Norfolk jacket, and put out a hand to feel how the pleats were made. He did it very gently and civilly, far more so than a Capetown lady who wanted to take the pattern of my coat-sleeves.

The old generals answered unanimously, and Melala was given no choice but to repeat their dictum. Sooner than be thrown to the Boers, their old enemies, they would fight. I asked whom they could fight. To this there was no answer, so I said, 'You would not fight your mother, the Queen, for she would chastise you. You would not fight Mr. Rhodes, for he is a son of your mother, the Queen, and does as she tells him. No, Melala will not fight.'

Melala asked me to tell him what were the laws which Mr. Rhodes made for Kaffirs.

Then there happened to me one of the strangest things which has ever occurred in my life. It came to me like a revelation that the one hope of Africa was, humanly speaking, in this man's hands.

* This was, I believe, Galishwe, a bad spirit among the Batlapin.

I can only set it down as it happened. Half an hour before, had anyone asked me, I should have found many faults in Mr. Rhodes, and generally considered him an over-rated man; a man who was decidedly gifted, and possessed of a University education, and certainly quite a match for Afrikanders, but who would, nevertheless, have shrunk into insignificance at St. Stephen's.

Here, in this native Raad, I suddenly saw that a great necessity demanded one influential Englishman, capable of making his voice heard, and that the precise tone or colour of his opinion was of far less importance than that it should be emphatic and final. There was only one such man. The tremendously isolated and yet intensely sympathetic nature of Cecil Rhodes fitted him for this peculiar work. And before I knew what I was doing, I was pointing these Kaffirs to him, as the man who meant wisely and well by them, who would teach them how to cultivate their lands and make twice as much corn grow as grew before, and who would give them chances of earning money and becoming rich. I told Melala to take example by his mother the Queen, who, when she found her land too small for her people, sent out the young and strong ones to find fresh land; and when she found her cattle-posts at home eaten up, sent her cattle in big ships over the seas and fed them in countries where cattle never fed before.

This about the cattle interested them supremely, and they wanted to know how many head of cattle the Queen had. I shrugged my shoulders and laughed.

Then Melala asked me what I was doing. He made up his mind that I had come to trade, and I think they all wanted to bargain with me about my jacket. But I told him I was not a trader, but a traveller; and I was

going through his great country. Melala grew very excited at this, and begged me to return and tell him what I thought. I then took my leave, Melala standing up and making a royal salute by waving his arm and bringing his forefinger down upon his lips. He also insisted upon the whole Raad standing up, making them a speech with a great deal of action.

After my return to the inn, I paid a visit to the magistrate, and after luncheon arranged for my departure. The arrangement for the hire of my waggon had been kindly made for me by Mr. Manning, so that I had nothing to do but get into it when it was ready. The span consisted of sixteen oxen. I had two native boys and a Dutch transport rider—at least, he seemed of mongrel origin, but wholly Dutch by sympathy—and a young Englishman (Mr. Covernton), to sleep under the waggon and carry a gun. The waggon contained a locker for provisions, a spring mattress, and some hooks were added for canvas bags. It was a full tent waggon commonly used for trade. In the daytime I sat on one of the men's kit-sacks in the back, on my own deck-chair by the camp-fire at night.

The groceries I brought up from Capetown. There were two tins of ground coffee, a ham, arrowroot, 7 lb. of tea, tinned tongues, corned beef, soups, butter, milk, a cheese, 7 lb. of lard, a large tin of captain's biscuits. We added half a sheep and a dozen loaves of bread. The magistrate's wife kindly sent me a present of bread just as I started, which was particularly welcome on account of its exceptional quality. Bread was a great difficulty on my trek. Not the least valuable part of our provisions was a case of Bovril. This preparation was most useful in all its forms, especially the

rollers of dry soup, as they could be used so easily whenever wanted. Our cooking utensils consisted of a pot-oven, a pot, a gridiron, and a frying-pan. I had my own spirit-lamp besides. There were enamelled pannikins for cups, and the same ware for plates.

The first thing I saw on arriving to take possession of my waggon was the whole span of sixteen oxen careering with the empty waggon round the veldt at full tilt, with all the loose Kaffirs in the place howling in pursuit. Someone managed to put on the break, and the oxen got tired of the game, or at least became less unanimous. It was explained that most of the span were young and had never been inspanned in their lives before, and so 'did not know the meaning of it.'

Then Melala rode up to say good-bye, which he did with a great air of importance, and to impress on me that his youngest brother was going with me (which he did, as my cook; and a very good boy Monkeran was).

I was eating a piece of cold duck at the back of the waggon at the time, as I did not know where or when my next meal might take place.

The first trek was a short one down the road to the Hartz River, which we crossed that night. Here Mr. Manning camped out alongside of us, and dined with us that evening, Stephen having driven my unruly cattle so far, and with terrific howls and lashes taught them 'what it meant.'

The next morning I did not get up, as we started early to ascend a mountain—in fact, the De Kaap range which runs down to Kimberley. Mr. Manning shouted his good wishes, and then began my first experience of

climbing a mountain in an ox-waggon. I simply resigned myself to await events; the most probable and expected being that the whole machine would presently crash to atoms, and I should find myself among its splinters on the bare rocks. I could not raise my head to look out for the peril of a jolt which brought it back again with such force as nearly to break my neck. I was too out of breath to utter a word, but I believe I groaned once or twice. The misery probably only lasted an hour, but to myself it seemed an eternity, and when it was over I felt incapable of stirring hand or foot, or of remembering even my own name.

Once on the plateau above the rocks the road was fairly good, and when we halted I was quite ready for breakfast. We were trekking first to Count Plater's at Grootfontein, which we reached in about a week's time. The Count and his partners, the young Mr. Meyers, own a good tract of excellent territory, which was granted to Count Plater by old Monkeran, of Taungs, after the long fight with the Boers. There is also a well-stocked store at Grootfontein, over which the Count presides himself. It is quite an emporium, and may be considered the Marshal and Snelgrove of the Dutch. The land is part of an old vlei, and the springs which work their way out of the rock are probably the catchment of some high peaks about seven miles off. This vlei has been in part drained, its waters controlled, and led where they are wanted. The soil is rich, dark alluvial deposit, mixed with the trampled rushes, which were trodden down when big game frolicked in the shade of the reeds and rank vegetation. Now this old swamp is well planted with peaches and other fruit-trees, besides Lombardy poplars. Every

kind of fruit and vegetable grows luxuriously : tomatoes so profusely that the Count feeds his pigs with them ; beetroot, parsnips, carrots, potatoes, artichokes and pumpkins, besides mealies and corn.

As an instance of the uncertainty of land purchase in South Africa, quite close to this fertile land were farms belonging to a land company on which no water could be found, though every means had been exhausted in the search.

The Count's experience in Africa has been considerable, and I found that he applied the same enthusiasm and intelligence to everything he touched, no matter whether it were store-keeping, diamonds, cattle, gardening, or cooking. It was a strange experience to meet a man with the finished manners of this Russian Count, living in a mud hut up-country, with a one-legged Bushman as his servant ; and as we sat and talked after dinner across the wooden settle which answered for our table, our conversation tended to become a strange mixture, for the Count had known friends of my own in London many years ago. On Sunday he came to my waggon for afternoon tea and English jam, and afterwards we went to visit some of Khama's people who had come down to trade with him. They were great beggars, but very clever in native work, and were always busy braying a skin, sewing a karross, mounting a hartebeest's tail, or carving a wooden bowl out of the solid. They were by way of being Christians, and occasionally howled psalm tunes through their noses and their set teeth with dreadful fervour. A Kaffir loves to chant something with a rhythm, which he can accent by his labour. They were very angry with me because I

would not encourage their begging, and one of them sneered and said something in Kaffir. The Count heard it, and shouted with laughter. It was to the effect that Barotse would like to know if I worked hard in my mealie plot. I said, 'Tell him I do; no one works harder.'

One evening the Count dined with me. My cabin trunk was the table, a karross turned inside out was the cloth. My transport rider boiled the last half of a leg of mutton, and I sent Monkeran to the store for a saucepan. The Count was not there, but the message being taken to him, he presently appeared in my camp, and set down the saucepan by the fire, vanishing as suddenly as he had come.

Count Plater said that the present time was the commencement of a new era in Bechuanaland. The increased population in Africa meant a greater demand for agricultural products, and men would therefore give their attention and devote their capital to farming; and rather less would be done in trade and other things. He laid great stress on the large profits to be made by cattle-farming combined with trading, declaring that a really capable man could make from 80 to 200 per cent. The great thing was to provide against the times of loss which seemed inseparable from all sorts of South African ventures. There were always the seven fat years and the seven lean years, and mysterious plagues and pests of all descriptions. No man should ever farm with a view to his maximum profit, however large that might be in a year of exceptional prosperity. He should always be looking round for some means for minimizing his losses. For instance, when cattle are first turned out upon raw veldt, a great number are sure to die of

some kind of disease. They should be destroyed at once wherever the hides can be saleable, the carcasses should be burnt either with lime, or acids, or with fire, and the residue used as manure. As the great want in the soil is phosphates of lime, there is no more valuable manure than that obtained in this manner. Then, with regard to locusts, which would very likely attack Bechuanaland sooner or later, the only way to meet the ruin they might entail in a year was to place a certain portion of land in crops which, if less remunerative, were, at any rate, certain to escape, and which could be used as food-stuffs in emergency. The Count laid great stress on the importance of feeding the veldt in rotation: first with goats, which he believed ate up injurious vegetation, and thrive on plants which were poisonous to cattle; then with Afrikaner sheep, if these could be managed; then with Kaffir cattle; lastly with Afrikaner and Friesland for a couple of years, after which time the cattle would begin to die, when they should be sold off immediately before the veldt becomes poisoned; and goats started afresh.

Count Plater's system of irrigation is the most useful in gardens and among fruit-trees. The land is divided into squares or oblongs by a trench about 18 inches deep and 1 foot wide. The fruit-trees are planted on the edge or side of the squares (which resemble large flower-beds), and when irrigation is required the water is turned into the trench, and soaks through the sides. Thus the land absorbs as much as it wants, and the roots of the fruit-trees are not attracted to the surface.

A good deal is said about bad ways of irrigating land, and the evil results of turning currents loose on the

surface ; but nevertheless the system answers very well on the whole, and it is better to irrigate roughly than not at all. What is certainly more needed than most people believe is the making of top soil by applying dressings of lime, marl, clay, gypsum, clay-slates, or anything else likely to improve the top, and carting manure on with it. In all likelihood the old bottoms would hold the rain moisture better if a little flesh, so to speak, were laid over the dry bones, and irrigation cease to be so imperative a necessity. Constantly forcing crops out of the soil cannot be continued indefinitely. Then there is the question of alkalies, which are said to work their way to the surface on the application of water. This again points to the need of giving rest to the land, as many plants will not grow if their roots are touched with alkali. The probability is that others might answer all the better ; at all events, the Australian salt-bush might be tried. It would certainly be an advantage to discover some plant which would draw the alkali out of the ground, and present it to cattle in an edible and palatable form. Altogether there is a wide field for investigation on scientific principles of the analysis of soil, and how to correct or improve it, in Africa.

When we left Count Plater, we took with us, among other gifts, a sackful of the vegetables which were then in season, and I had a chance of testing the admirable quality of the roots grown in Bechuanaland. There were carrots, parsnips, artichokes, and beetroot, and so fresh and good were they that they remained firm and of perfect flavour as long as they lasted.

I had been told that root crops would not answer in South Africa, and that the idea of feeding stock upon

them was not to be entertained. Yet in face of what I saw here, and knowing that the oft-recurring and never-failing problem of African farming is how to maintain condition—or, as an English farmer would say, how to keep stock ‘doing’—these eminently successful roots offered a valuable suggestion. If the mealie, hay, or dried sorghum could be chaffed and salted and mixed at the rate of 1 bushel of turnips, parsnips, or carrots, to 3 bushels of chaff, the feeding properties of both would be improved. It would necessitate a little labour in pulping the roots, but considering the gravity of the losses in stock, due to disease engendered by scarcity in the veldt, surely moderate feeding such as this would answer in times of drought. Wherever silage had been tried I found that it was discarded. Roots would be preferable, considering the moisture they contain. In this respect the turnip would be the most valuable, but Jerusalem artichokes are more watery, while parsnips contain more nourishment. I mention artichokes partly because they are very watery, and partly because Count Plater found them especially easy to cultivate. In the light soil of Bechuanaland they come up very clean, and hardly require washing. One thing is clear, that surface irrigation would never suit roots. In this mangel would probably score, as the water could be turned on down the horse furrows. Count Plater *left the roots in the ground*; he did not find clamping them answer.

CHAPTER V.

FROM GROOTFONTEIN TO METITONG VIA KURUMAN.

FROM Grootfontein we trekked downhill to a vast plain, where there were a few farms, and afterwards we came to the cattle-posts of Kaffirs, and then to a small settlement.

This place possessed a somewhat melancholy history. It was called Kok, though that may not have been its real name. Many years ago the missionaries (probably French Huguenots) had taught the people to irrigate a garden, and had planted peach-trees. All was now wild, and in ruins. There among the empty water-furrows and garden plots run to waste were three mounds—two long ones and a small one. They were those of the old chief, who was a friend of the missionary, of his son and grandson. It seemed that some kind of plague had visited the district—possibly small-pox—and carried off these good people, whose memories were still venerated. Only one old man stuck to their ways, though his Christianity had faded into a mere haze of negations on most points. He still attended to a certain amount of irrigation, and I found him at work irrigating his first sowing of Kaffir corn. He (an octogenarian) and the women of the place did all the work, while the others lounged, spat, and smoked. They came round my waggon to beg, and when I

looked across to the ruined gardens, and to the emaciated, feeble figure of the one toiler, and thought how all the best land had been thus squandered upon these idlers, I felt that I could have beaten them.

We were making our way to Kuruman, and soon after this the great dark hills came in sight; and day after day I could watch them changing by degrees as we slowly approached them. Some of my strangest experiences were with the Boers whose farms I had passed. Now and again I had entered one of their houses, taking with me my transport rider. It is difficult to conceive such an existence as these people live. They had many of them high-sounding Dutch names familiar to me in the colony; and I believe many of them could claim kinship with some of the best Dutch families. Their houses were not nearly so commodious or airy as the Kaffirs' huts. They did not appear to have the least pride or pleasure in keeping them well. On one occasion I came upon two families living in houses which nearly touched. These houses consisted of one room, about 14 by 10 feet. The cooking was done at a kind of bakery outside. There were three grown-up men, two women, apparently wives, two girls of about fifteen, and the rest a mob of children, bareheaded and barefooted. I counted fourteen persons altogether. The faces of the men were rather more intelligent than those of the women. But their intelligence consisted in the quick light in their eyes, which suggested cunning more than anything else. They were very morose, and seemed to spend their days with their hands in their pockets leaning against the wall of the house. Presently one of them would say something to a child, who would run away and reappear

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leading a lean-looking horse. In a few minutes the man would mount, with his gun slung behind him, and ride away.

The wives made me think of what women might have been, even in England, in the days of the three Edwards. The countenance of one of them is printed in my mind now, as I sat opposite to her in her hut, and she leant her arms on her knees while her feet rested on a stool. Her head was attired in a hood of folded print with a band of linen across her forehead, and a curtain of the same material hanging in folds passing from her ears under her chin. I was afterwards to see many Boer women with this headgear, and even with faces still more muffled up, and was told they did it *to save their complexions!* This woman's face was simply brutal. As I looked into her eyes and scanned every lineament, I could not find a trace of kindness or sympathy, and, most awful of all, as I looked I saw the Kaffir looking at me through the dusky skin, and knew for certain that there was a strong and recent mixture of savage black blood mixing with semi-savage white.

I could not imagine what these people did with themselves all day. Was it *Nirvana*? They themselves, I suppose, believed they had arrived at the state of peace which God gives to His beloved, and looked upon the restlessness of the British temperament with contempt and aversion. But it made my heart ache when one little girl with fair hair drew near my camp-fire, and at last very timidly came up to where I was sitting, and touched my hand and looked into my face.

I rose to my feet holding her hand, and a confused rush of Carlyle's words came into my mind, and seemed to peal across the veldt. By what right were people

withholding education from these children, and bringing them up to run more wild than savages, to breed like animals, and to know even less of good and more of evil? Was this the freedom that these people loved?

It struck me as too sad for words to think of the many young lives sacrificed by the cranks and crotchets of these peculiar people. Once it was my lot to visit some colonial Boers with whose whole history I was familiar. They were descended from an old Frenchman, who fled from the horrors of the Revolution. He landed at the Cape with his wife and one child, and brought with him some silver plate and furniture. Hither they came to the land of the Hottentot and Kaffir, to thorns and thirsts, and they settled in what are now the Eastern Provinces. One fine day the Kaffirs raided the farm, burnt it, and murdered the man. His wife and the child, then a young man, after sundry vicissitudes, settled in the Western Provinces. With indomitable pluck the young fellow set to work to plant vineyards and build a house. He married a lady with a small fortune, and this increased his capital. The farm became well known for its wine, and two fine houses with large dams—one for his mother and the other for himself—testify to his success. A small stream was utilized to turn a mill, and several hundred slaves were employed on the estate. These slaves appear to have been very kindly treated, and quite happy in their lot. There is nothing, however, in this to excuse or recommend slavery, for in this instance it worked the principal ruin of this family. Three sons and several daughters, as they grew up, accustomed to the service of slaves, and feeling no necessity for the industry which raised their father's fortunes, spent their time

in idleness and pleasure. The constant spectacle of slave-work, and the fact that the white man had merely to give orders, placed the idea of work in a false position. We in our country are accustomed to look with contempt and suspicion on a man who does nothing, and the road to distinction which may raise a man to the peerage who began life as an office boy is work. It is no longer a case with us of *Who is he?* but *What has he done?* But this is part of the development of our civilization, and these old Frenchmen and the Boers in general are actually proud of doing nothing, except, of course, where they have touched the fringe of the new philosophy.

When the abolition of slavery came, it fell like a thunderbolt upon these people. It was, in fact, an extremely harsh measure; for it was passed upon a people who were utterly unprepared for it. It meant ruin.

The pride of the Boers was so great that they would neither buckle to and work themselves, nor retrench and live within their reduced incomes. Of course the alternative was to borrow money, and this they did from a large banking firm. The money thus acquired was spent in living as before. The father meantime had died, and the estate was divided between the three sons—one of whom remained unmarried. The history of the next few years was one of constant struggle with the bank respecting the interest on the bonds. At last the phylloxera came down on the vineyards. Wine and its secret had long been lost and abandoned, and only brandy and raisins were produced. About half the estate went out of cultivation, and the bank decided to foreclose and sell the property. The bidding was so

much below the value of the bonds that the bank bought in the estate, and then committed the blunder of taking on the original owners as tenants, with the result that the same game was continued about the rent which had been begun about the interest. After years of worry and threatened litigation, the bank decided to get rid of the property for anything it would fetch. Great was the astonishment when the tenants themselves appeared as purchasers. It was true that the land had been let down and the buildings were terribly out of repair, but the fact remained that the people who could not find a moderate rent suddenly produced sufficient capital to buy the estate.

When I visited them, I found two old gentlemen sitting in front of a beautiful old Dutch house under a trellis of vines, one smoking and the other spelling out a tattered newspaper printed in Cape Dutch. They received me most courteously, with the air and manner of old France. I could not but admire them. They had the grandest way of talking about their extensive property, and were not loath to point out the immense returns which a little outlay and trouble might produce. 'But,' they added, with a flourish, 'it is not worth our while.' The roof was almost off the house, and they admitted that the rain was sometimes 'inconvenient.' The stores were rotten, the mill choked with rust and hung with cobwebs. It was 'not worth their while' to use it. One old gentleman believed himself to be a genius. He told me that 'the world had certainly lost a great deal' in him, but it had never been worth his while to pursue his inventions further than 'just for amusement.' Yet he owned that he once had a fancy to visit England, believing that the English

were a people who would have appreciated him. Hearing all this made me most anxious to see some of his inventions, and indescribable indeed were my feelings when I found that the whole of them amounted to one mousetrap on which he had been occupied for 'many years,' and for the construction of which he had demolished a grandfather's clock!

His brother likewise had 'a taste,' as he put it, and this soon made itself heard by the resounding cry of a 'pride of peacocks.' About a dozen of these splendid birds paraded through the ruined buildings and flew up and perched on the tumbledown thatch behind the scrolled gables. The old man knew their pedigrees, and showed them off as an English nobleman might show his prize shorthorns or his racing stud.

But the sad part of the affair was the lives of the brother and sister who were bound to 'honour' the old people, and whose lives were tied and fettered by the old men's prejudices and peculiarities. These two young people were charming. They were devoted to each other, and by dint of friendship with an English schoolmaster, who lived not far off, had acquired a good knowledge of English. They read with avidity any books and papers they could get. Both of them understood the errors and mistakes of the old men, but yet they would not try to cut themselves adrift or to make a career for themselves. They were kept in total ignorance of the pecuniary affairs, and yet whatever work was done on the farm was by and through their hands or their orders. There was besides such genuine gentility, such amiability and courtesy, such unselfishness, that it made one's heart ache to think of a devotion so vain and profitless.

As I drove away from the farm, the two old gentlemen stood watching me curiously, and the young people came out to shake my hand and wave me a farewell ; and then a hideous exultant shout resounded from the crazy roof of the old house : 'Sodom and Gomorrah ! Gomorrah ! Gomorrah !'—the last derisive shriek of the pride of peacocks.

Let us at least not be slow to give the Dutch due credit for the advances which they have made. I do not speak of those on the coast within reach of the outer world, but I remembered Bechuanaland and these up-country farms when I was on board ship coming home. We had an old 'Duchess' on board who had come down out of the Transvaal and actually taken ship for England. As I looked at her resolute countenance, I thought that step for her needed no less courage than the advance or trek of the Boers from Cape Colony to the North. She was determined to make the most of her opportunities, and we had not been many days at sea before she heard of the 'New Woman.' She was consumed with curiosity to see a specimen at as early a date as possible, and went about the ship making careful inquiries of the captain and crew as well as of the passengers. People told her she must wait till we got to Madeira. When we got there the whole ship was convulsed with astonishing news from America and war scares which upset the fiery element on board, and they became very truculent. Some were for starting from Plymouth to fight the Americans in New York ; others raved about Pretoria. I thought the Dutch on board behaved with great reserve, for we were most unpleasant. I saw the 'Duchess' looking very crestfallen, having failed again

at Madeira. Then the anchor came up and the great ship slewed round and scuttled off with us all in her inside, typical, I thought, of 'l'aplomb irritant des Anglais en voyage,' which is so aggravating to the French. The band was playing 'Johnny comes marching home,' while a party of Americans drowned the *Times* newspaper by putting it overboard. Then a colonial Boer, who had not had time to see it, and was vexed, told them that '*we* had taken New York,' adding to me afterwards, 'I liked to tell those fellows that! You know I never fight unless I'm sure to win.' It was this same Boer who retorted to a Hollander who jeered at his Dutch as 'no sort of Dutch': 'Indeed! *I* speak the Queen of England's Dutch.'

Depend upon it, there is a great deal which is well worth having in 'the Queen of England's Dutch.' But what a confused and crazy idea they must form of us, these Rip van Winkles!

But to return to Bechuanaland once more.

The cattle disease in this part of the country was very bad, and there seemed to be several distinct kinds. I tried to find out what remedies were used by the Boers and Kaffirs, but could obtain no satisfactory answer. Once I was told that soapy water was good for a complaint which appeared to tally with that known at home as *red-water*. Tobacco-water was a favourite remedy, but the usual idea was that all remedies were vain. A horse suffering from horse-sickness underwent a treatment which its owner believed to be specific, *because he knew a horse which had been treated so, and did not die*. The treatment was as follows, and the horse which did not die must have been one of bronze. It was taken up from the veldt and well washed all over

with soap and water. Then it was turned out on the veldt to dry. The man who followed this prescription for horse-sickness lost his horse, and in consequence he will never try any more remedies for cattle disease, let them be what they may.

It was therefore useless to talk to the ordinary Boer about cattle diseases. If I was to learn anything about them, it could only be from men of intelligence, such as Count Plater, Mr. Pryce, and others.

The view of Kuruman seen from the plain is very fine. I got out of the waggon and walked ahead in the sunset to enjoy the approach in silence. The vast plain of the veldt stretched to either side of me and all round to the horizon. It was like being in mid-ocean, so far off seemed the line where heaven and earth met. Low gray Vaal bushes cast purple shadows on the red earth, and the scorched grass of the veldt reflected the pink and gold of the sunset. The sky was streaked with colour, flushing and glowing like the heart of a flower, till at length it settled down into a curtain ragged and blood-stained, as though fingers dipped in gore had torn the silken screen and left it frayed and tattered.

The dark hills of Kuruman rose stern and forbidding against this sky, and one peak looked especially volcanic, and the ground all round me as I walked began to show traces of volcanic rock. The track lay over red sand, through which the hard white quartz and limestone protruded, over which the waggon jolted and thundered. The last few miles the sand was suffocating, as the oxen churned it up with their feet, and I was too tired to walk ahead of them. By the time we reached the mission-station, which was late after a long trek, I

was suffering excruciatingly with fatigue and hunger. My eyes were blinded with sand, my hair was full of it, my mouth and throat were parched, and my tongue seemed swollen. The sand had eaten into my skin, and covered my clothes. My finger-nails were broken down to the quick, and I had a tiresome blister just inside my wrist-band. Worst of all, I felt a great depression of spirits, as I realized the difficulties and hardships which English people would encounter who came to settle in this country. Still, a dogged determination to rise above all obstacles seemed to strengthen within me.

Mr. Pryce, of the mission-station, received me very kindly, and gave me a most comfortable meal, after which I returned to my waggon, where I found the boys asleep by the dying fire under the high wide vault in which shone a small round moon as large as a three-penny bit. The oxen lay at their gear in a long row, and a deep regular snore from between the waggon wheels told me that Mr. Covernton also was resting soundly.

The next morning I called upon Mr. Chapman, the store-keeper, and Captain and Mrs. Macgregor, who received me very kindly. They did not take an encouraging view of Bechuanaland. Captain Macgregor wrote me some letters for the police along my route, and Mrs. Macgregor made me a present of some excellent biltong, which I found most useful on my trek. The Macgregors were living in Dr. Moffat's old house, and they pointed out to me Livingstone's tree, and others matters of historic interest.

I also called on Mr. Bam, the magistrate, and while at his house was shown the wonderful cavern of Kuruman. It is thought that this cave runs back about

a mile into the mountain, but the end of it has not been explored. The opening is extremely narrow, and the mouth of the cave is filled with a lake. Mr. Bam told me that a man had once waded 150 yards, but his candle then went out, and he came back. I observed that birds passed in and out, and there appeared to be many water-birds in the neighbourhood. In this cave there are some old barbel, very large, and perfectly white. No one knows how long they have been there, or who put them there. It would be absolutely impossible for a barbel to get up to the slit or crack in the rock and down the passage. Mr. Bam told me that gold in paying quantities had been found in the mountains about three miles from Kuruman.

The cattle diseases here were very bad. The land is only suitable for large holdings, and it amazed me to find how little was done by way of improvement by the natives, who held the best land. There is a wide, well-watered vlei belonging to the mission-station, but, from what I could see of it, very little labour or attention was bestowed on this highly fertile land. Oranges grow well there, but apparently in a half-wild state.

Mr. Pryce took an intelligent view of the cause of failure and the way to success. 'A man should be very industrious,' he said, 'and able to turn his hand to everything, from cooking his food, mending and washing his clothes, to shoeing his horse and building his hut. Then he should be thrifty, and contented to make as small profit as he can, and to turn everything about him to account. Lastly, he should certainly have in capital not less than £1,000 after purchasing his land.'

I was astonished at the rate of mortality among the cattle. On a new farm this would continue for four or five years at the rate of thirty or forty beasts a year out of three or four hundred. By the end of that time the land would improve, and the beasts become seasoned. The chief diseases were called lung sickness (which I afterwards found was pleuro-pneumonia, or something very similar), and an affection of the liver and spleen, which Kaffirs call makokomalo, but I believe it is similar to laversiekte, and for which a dose of calomel seems the only remedy. Nowhere else on my travels did I hear of so much disease. Even the poultry died suddenly of complaints the like of which no one had ever heard.

I was most astonished at the little which appeared to be done to overcome these diseases. I reflected that if cattle were simply turned out, and left to wander about, red-water and other complaints would get into the land anywhere, and how much more in a dry country than in a wet one. I thought of the great care we exercised at home, and the amount of skilled veterinary work that is required in a single county in the course of one year. Yet there was no qualified veterinary surgeon in the whole of this Crown colony. It was the great cattle country of Africa, and if diseases were to breed and spread, and become rife, they could do so nowhere more rapidly than here. It seemed to me that a great danger existed to the whole of Africa by the hordes of native cattle alone, of which no sort of record was kept, and which roamed over vast tracts of unfenced land.

Mr. Pryce advocated preventive measures. Since it is believed that makokomalo is due to the absence of

salt in the soil, and the absence of phosphates in the grass, he recommends giving salt to the cattle, and phosphates in some kind of a lick. He has found it beneficial to burn the bones of dead cattle, and throw the ashes into the tanks where the cattle drink. For his milch kine he made the ashes into cakes with bran and salt, and found that the creatures so fed were free from makokomalo. Much that he told me reminded me of Count Plater's views. He also agreed with the Count as to feeding and trampling the grasses with hardy, vigorous Afrikander goats before turning in cattle. The trampling of the grasses must certainly be beneficial in a soil which is so raw and new as that of Bechuanaland.

I left Kuruman on July 6, and had some difficulty from that time forward with my transport rider. I never heard of anyone yet who escaped annoyance from these fellows, so the matter was not exceptional. My man suffered from a desire to return home; and, since he could not do so without me, his plan was to make me turn back, therefore every obstacle was put in my way. The oxen were 'lost,' or they were 'sick'; the gear was 'broken.' Then one evening he slipped off with the waggon, and left me alone on the veldt outside a native village. I walked after him, and found him sitting by the camp-fire, after a very short trek, probably making up his mind that the next morning he would be off with the waggon to Vryburg, and report me 'lost.' My sudden appearance seemed to startle him more than I could have believed possible. He did not try this trick again, but adhered to the losing of the cattle. I waited patiently till I reached the next police camp, and then I told him exactly what I thought of

his behaviour, and let him know what the consequences would be unless he altered it *at once for the better*.

After this matters improved ; but I had always to keep a watchful eye upon him, for it is not an easy thing to find a waggon in the veldt when it has once passed out of sight. I always noticed the stars and the direction in which we were travelling, and never allowed many hours to pass without very carefully examining such maps as I had. Fortunately, Nature has gifted me with very alert senses ; and perhaps this, as much as anything, impressed my people with respect.

We trekked across the Matlaring River, which was running pretty strong, though it was getting near the end of the dry season. It was somewhere near the Matlaring River that I heard the English cuckoo. People may think that this is only a traveller's yarn, but I am certain I heard it, and that it was the bird itself. I only heard it that once, just about sunrise ; but the note sounded persistently for about a minute, then once or twice further off, and then it ceased.

The next day at noon we reached some pans, where the water was principally rain-water ; but it seemed that a good deal of 'brak' was in the soil. A number of cattle came out of the bush to drink at these pans, and sickness of every description seemed rife. I followed one young ox, longing to shoot it, to put it out of its misery. Its whole body was shrunk and withered, and it was wretchedly lame, especially about the hind-legs. There was no appearance of fever, but a terribly distressed look in its long, gaunt face. It drank only a few mouthfuls of water, and hobbled back into the bush. My transport rider said this was a

case of stavier sickness. I did not see anyone looking after the cattle, except a few Kaffir boys.

The soil was full of a white powder, which was gritty to the taste and rather salt. The bottom of the pans, which were artificial, was a greasy clay. The veldt here was particularly sweet. Mr. Covernton brought me the nest of a tit made like a little bag of white flannel. The material used was the Vaal bush blossom, most cleverly woven. The nest contained one egg, a perfect oval, and beautifully white. The thorns in parts of Bechuanaland are prodigious, and of every possible shape. They are very injurious to the fleeces of sheep and Angora goat, as is also a grass called 'sticky grass,' from the small splinters which work their way into the wool.

That evening we arrived at Metitong, an old mission-station, and outspanned at the store of Messrs. Beadle and Barker. The view from the outspan was very fine, looking across a steep decline and a wide valley to a range of hills, in which direction lay Takoon, and beyond it Vryburg.

There were groups of Kaffir huts, and a dance was going on; the weird singing which accompanied it floated up to my camp. This was the scene of a good deal of fighting in former days, and the mission-station and store were burnt and looted at least once. According to Mr. Beadle junior, a good deal of this spirit lurks in the natives still.* I found Mr. Beadle in his house, and, though he was lame from an accident, he kindly walked across the veldt to show me the old mission garden, which is left to run wild, and the almost roofless and dilapidated barn which did duty for

* It is breaking out now as this book goes to press.

both church and school. It is not creditable to the London Missionary Society to leave their land and their buildings in such a condition. It was originally a French Protestant mission-station, and the pastors laid out the garden and planted apple-trees, figs, and Vaal willows. The fruit-trees were broken and run wild, but the willows were very fine specimens, and showed what might be done if tree-planting were taken up with energy. It appeared to me that this spot would be an excellent centre for a Government official to raise plants and trees, study cattle diseases, and distribute information among farmers.

Mr. Beadle told me that land was rising in value, as farmers trekked in from the Free State and the Transvaal. He recommended Angora goats on fresh veldt. He found that Afrikander sheep answered well. In cattle he inclined to Kaffir and Friesland, especially the cross-breeds; shorthorns were altogether a mistake. The younger Mr. Beadle corroborated what his brother had said, but he spoke more enthusiastically of the life. Having been ten years in the country, he had no desire to leave it. He showed me a nursery of young trees. There were blue-gums, cypresses, oranges, and cedars; peach-trees were growing splendidly in the garden, and a magnificent vine, which he said bore luxuriantly, climbed over a trellis and made a wide shade to the stoep. A row of young trees were growing well in front of the house; they were called the 'Pride of India.' I did not admire their growth, but I believe the wood is hard and useful. Mr. Beadle believed that lung sickness can be cured, and he told me so many instances of it that I began to think lightly of the complaint.

The next morning, as I sat on my waggon box writing

my notes, the Kaffirs passed to trade at the store. I was particularly struck with Jacob, whose hat I coveted. I believe he came up to the store out of curiosity, and the hat was put on on purpose. It was made of golden jackal skin, and I bought it for half a crown and a box of matches.

Early the next morning Mr. Beadle was at work baking a batch of bread, and before my departure he brought me a very welcome present of loaves and fresh eggs. Upon leaving Metitong, I directed our trek across a sand-river, called the Mashowing, to the farm of a young Free Stater called Cullinan; but my transport rider declared he could not go beyond the further bank of the river that day.

The next morning I got up early and went down to the river. The wind was intensely cold, and it was said that leopards were in the bank, so that my boys had been restless all night and made big fires. A good deal of limestone, which cattle had churned into a kind of pipe-clay, lay on the river banks. There was also a great amount of the white powder, and large blocks of red granite were fast decomposing; and it seemed to me that if *anywhere* this river could be turned loose upon a low-lying plain, the soil deposited would be of immense value.

It was about 9 a.m. when I reached Red Glen. I heard that Mr. Cullinan believed in taking up cattle-ranching in Bechuanaland as nearly in the American style as possible. He had evidently gone into the business with great spirit, and was very hopeful.

When I arrived I found young Mrs. Cullinan living without a servant, in the house which her husband had

built for her with his own hands. She had a baby of a few months old, and found the additional trouble a great tax on her strength. The little one was very well cared for, and chirped and laughed in its perambulator. Mr. Cullinan had himself made every brick of which the house was constructed, and the furniture surprised me as much from its quality as the difficulty of transport. There was even a piano, and everything was fresh and new.

He was out himself, and had been out since very early that morning, branding his cattle; and Mrs. Cullinan seemed very pleased to see me, kindly bringing me a cup of tea and begging me to stay for their mid-day dinner. The difficulty of getting any servants at all seemed very great; and I could not but admire the brave manner in which she met this undeniable trouble. Yet what a lonely life it seemed for this young wife!

I waited till Mr. Cullinan came in, and after he had made a hasty meal we went out to see his cattle. A barbed-wire fence runs right round his property, and his cattle were a very great improvement on any I had seen hitherto. He said, 'It's no use for a poor man to come here, nor small capitalists, either; this is not the country for them.' He considered that he had put £5,000 into his land besides his own work for two years. This year, being the third year, is the first year that he has made anything, and he has made £700. He believes that he sees his way to making £2,000 per annum. His cows pay him £2 a head per annum in butter, and £1 10s. for the calf. He reckons that a calf makes £1 a year until it is mature. On fat beasts sold at Vryburg he makes 60 per cent., but he hopes to make even more when his own-bred stock are fit to

sell. At present the stock he has sold has been got by speculation, viz., buying outright, or changing with natives two poor beasts for one good one, and so on. These animals he lets run on his veldt, where the grass is very sweet and good, till they are fat and fit to sell at Vryburg.

But it was his own-bred stock which interested me most. He showed me a fine Devon bull and a good shorthorn. From these he breeds with the ordinary Afrikander cow. The Afrikander and Devon made a very handsome herd of young cattle, such as would have been an ornament to any English park at home.

For milch kine he uses the Friesland cow and shorthorn, and finds this cross answers better than the pure Friesland. His dairy interested me exceedingly. He uses a cream-separator, butter-worker, and barrel churn, all of the latest pattern. The butter is certainly excellent, and I was only too glad to accept Mrs. Cullinan's kind present of 2 lb. of it. It is sold to a contractor at Vryburg for 1s. 3d. per lb., and goes down to Capetown.

Mr. Cullinan told me that he considered there was a good opening for anyone who would import young pedigree bulls. He told me that Angus and Aberdeen are beginning to be used in the colony, but I never saw any of them there. He did not recommend Alderneys or Jerseys for Bechuanaland.

I visited the kraals where his cows were coming in to be milked, and the young stock. These last are kraaled at night until their third year, and are then branded and turned out to mature.


From all I could gather, it seemed clear that cattle-farming in Bechuanaland was more profitable than

sheep-farming in the colony; but it requires larger capital and considerable knowledge of stock. Mr. Cullinan not only possessed a quick eye for cattle, but having been born and bred in the Free State, he knew every breed of cattle in South Africa. He dwelt very strongly on the necessity of fencing, first to keep cattle away from the diseased and infected herds of the natives, and also to mitigate the losses through cattle-stealing. I did not see a single instance of a poor or sickly animal in these herds. Mr. Cullinan makes it a rule to get rid at once of a sickly or weedy animal.

He scoffed at the idea of farmers needing Protection, and said it was a shame to them if they did.

The veldt was sweet and well furnished with bush, under which the cattle could lie snug and warm in the cold nights. There were also plenty of good-sized camel-thorn trees, whose beans afford nourishing food for the cattle in the winter season. He approved of burning grass in moderation, and with due care to prevent the bushes and trees being destroyed. The ground was rocky, and the surface extremely dry. I asked him how it came that he chose so dry a farm. He told me that the land he first owned had abundance of water from springs, but the cattle died there. He denied that grasses were poisonous, and contended that it was a substance in the ground itself, and asked if I had seen the white powder lying about. 'That,' he said, 'is neither salt nor saltpetre, and wherever you get it the cattle will die.'

He was travelling through the country when he came across his present holding, which was then unallotted ground. It was believed to be dry land, but a little way off the track he found that some natives had scratched



a hole for water, and that the water was coming up strongly. They had brought their cattle here because the veldt was very sweet and fattening. Upon this he bought the land very cheaply as dry, unproved land. His suspicions proved correct, and by digging 5 feet he can at any time anywhere come upon a reservoir of sweet rainwater.

Without counting calves, Mr. Cullinan had 600 head of cattle, but he had lately sold two large droves.

I was sorry to be obliged to trek that evening, but it was some way to the next water, and we had to go on after dark, and start afresh in the small hours of the next morning. My boy Monkeran had been ill, and I had done most of the cooking since we left Kuruman. On these night treks Bovril was most acceptable, for the frosts were very sharp, and it was intensely cold after sundown. The whole country was full of ant-hills and ant-bear holes. It is said that wolves like to take possession of the ant-bear holes, and that this accounts for the hurried and foolish way these holes are often dug. More than once on my trek the waggon went down into one of these holes, which the silly ant-bear had made in the middle of the road. If she was there at the time, she must have felt the shock when we descended upon her, for the crash was tremendous. I hoped the sight of her remains next day would afford a warning to her belongings, for nothing is more unpleasant than to be passing softly along over deep sand, and suddenly, without the slightest preparation, to descend with a bang like the end of the world, and then, before one is quite sure that one's neck is not broken, to be hoisted up again with a murderous jerk.

CHAPTER VI.

KLEIN CHWIANG AND NATIVE CHIEFS.

THE next morning we reached a native location called Klein Chwiang. We had no business there at all, as it was out of our way ; but my boys had relations among the Kaffirs, and my transport rider was guided by their representations. The head man, ' James,' is brother to the King Monkeran, late chief of the Batlapin at Taungs. James came down to my waggon to see me, and had coffee. He was in sore perplexity because the old Chief of Honigs Vlei had sent his son Booti* to confer with him about the annexation. Young Booti had brought a friend or councillor with him, and a buck waggon-load of wise women, who were without exception the most extraordinary and evil-looking set of females I ever saw. They were deliberating as to whether or no they should fight the British ; and James was perplexed. He was not a courageous man. He had married a young wife, and if the Boers would only leave him alone, and not come too near him, he was quite content. But he feared changes, and begged me to tell him what Mr. Rhodes would do to him. I explained the Glen Grey Act as well as I could, speaking through my transport rider, who used Dutch, and James assented

* It is this Booti who has since distinguished himself by a small rising, and the murder of Mr. Robinson.

to the whole of what I said, and declared himself satisfied. Still, he said that if Melala ordered him to fight, he must fight. I pointed to the fate of those who fought Great Britain, and James took off his hat, and showed a white, bald patch. This hole a bullet had made the last and only time he had fought; and he made a vow then that never, *never* again would he fight—which decision I recommended him to keep.

A little tobacco and a box of matches finished the interview with James; and presently there rode into my camp a Boer, who represented himself as occupying an official position of some kind. He informed us that we had put ourselves in quarantine by camping on the wrong side of the road, and that properly speaking we ought to remain where we were until the quarantine of the district was raised. He also mentioned a charge for water, which he said was due to him and not to the Kaffirs. A shilling settled this difficulty, and he agreed to say no more about the quarantine.

Later on I had a chat with this lord of the manor. He told me that he was the representative of the Afrikaner Bond in Bechuanaland. After laying great stress on the power of the Bond, he went on to praise Mr. Rhodes. He spoke of the annexation with evident satisfaction, but asked with serious misgiving whether it would ever take place. He could not understand that the surrender could possibly be to Great Britain's advantage. I asked what he hoped to gain by it. He hesitated, and then, after some unctuous praise of the present arrangement, he admitted that nevertheless one or two things were needed. The first of these was trial by jury, which the Imperial Government refused on the score of expense. I answered that I thought they

were entitled to have it if they were prepared to pay for it. He was silent a moment, and then said, in a peevish, whining tone, that he did not think they had ever refused to pay for anything.

The next thing was the Court of Appeal, which he wanted to have moved to Capetown. Though abuses never had occurred under the present system, they might do so. 'Yes,' I answered, 'the Bond is naturally afraid of a state of things here like that in the Transvaal.'

He winced at this, and began to remark on the changes which had taken place in Bechuanaland since Sir Charles Warren came into the country.

As I watched him ride off, I wondered how a little French or German rule would suit men of his kidney.

There was here a small brak pan, and I went to visit it, and scraped up some of the crystals and powder which lay like a heavy frost for many yards round the rim. I put the scrapings into an old Bovril lozenge-box, and took it down to Capetown with me. It burnt in my mouth, and I spat out the scraping, which I had taken up on my knife. There was a strong smell of chloride of lime. Later on in my travels I collected another sample, from the farm called Faith, belonging to Mr. John Keeley.

The following is the letter and analysis which I received from the Department of Agriculture in Capetown:

'MADAM,

'In forwarding you the report by Mr. Jurist, the Departmental Analyst, on the samples of saline matter collected by you from a pan in Bechuanaland, I have the honour to state that I do not think that the saline

ingredients contained in these samples would be likely to induce any serious disease amongst cattle. The chlorides and sulphates of sodium and potassium would be healthful rather than detrimental, and cattle rarely consume more of these substances than they require when they have free access to them. The somewhat unusual salt of hypochlorite of lime exists in such small quantities that I do not think it would exercise any serious derangement of the animal organism.

‘ I have the honour to be, madam,

‘ Your obedient servant,

‘ D. HUTCHEON,

‘ Colonial Veterinary Surgeon.’

The analysis which accompanied this letter was as follows :

No. 1, Tin-box Sample ; No. 2, Match-box Sample.†*

‘ The saline matter in No. 1 simply consists principally of chlorides of sodium and potassium ; it also contains a little carbonate, and a very little sulphate, with a trace of magnesia.

‘ No. 2 sample consists principally of chlorides and carbonates of sodium and potassium, also containing a little sulphate with traces of alumina and magnesia. The insoluble portions of both samples contain lime.

‘ A faint odour of chloride of lime was noticeable in each sample, and upon testing for free chlorine, a slight trace of this substance was found, indicating the presence of a hypochlorite in the samples. However small the proportion of the hypochlorite may be, it is an un-

* From Klein Chwiang salt-pan.

† From Faith, near Mosita, brak from earth.

usual natural occurrence. The existence of oxy-chlorites of a few of the heavy metals is known, but hitherto the occurrence of natural hypochlorites of the alkalies and alkaline earths has apparently been unknown. Two other instances of occurrences of a similar nature have very lately come to my notice, which will form the subject of a later communication.

‘ J. C. WATERMEYER,

‘ Analyst.’

The ‘later communication’ here promised I never received. I cannot say, either, that I felt satisfied with the above. I still wished the analysis of these deposits to be carried further, and their effects upon crops and stock thoroughly explained; and I also regretted that I had not brought with me samples of the water, which was apparently mineral, and came from springs, and was reported to poison cattle. Of this I felt nearly sure, that the brak or efflorescence differs in different localities. In some places it seems almost pure salt fit for table purposes. Elsewhere it is mixed with salt-petre. In other places I saw it making a hard surface over the masonry of dams, similar to alabaster, and therefore, I suppose, containing silica. It is very well to say that this or that salt or carbonate would not hurt cattle in small doses; but if all they eat and drink is mixed with it, surely they must require some other kind of medicine to carry off the bad effects, and I cannot imagine that even a little chloride of lime can be beneficial. At any rate, I saw a great many cattle at Klein Chwiang, and they were much diseased. The veldt was sweet, but gnawed rather close. The pits from which we drew our drinking-water were artificial.

They were provided to conserve the catchment of a high round hill. The water in them was stale and disagreeable, and made our tea very nasty, for it was drawing towards the end of the dry season.

I went to return James's call. The Kaffirs here were more orderly and better behaved than any I had seen hitherto on my trek. It struck me that they were more industrious. I wanted to see how the negotiations with Master Booti and his old hags were progressing; so I took my transport rider as interpreter, and set off towards the village. James saw me in the distance; and came out to meet me, standing in the middle of the road with his hat off.

He took me to the hut kept by his young wife, who was a very handsome woman. He was proud of this wife and her hut, and when we arrived she was giving the last strokes to a 'spring clean,' with a small broom, outside the palisade of wattle. She came in with us, and I was given a chair with leather thongs for a seat, while James and the others sat on blocks of wood. Mrs. James kindled a fire, the smoke of which went out through the door, or wherever it could. Young Booti came in and sat by my side on a log. Then James asked me questions about England. He asked what the Queen thought of Kaffirs, and I answered that they were all her children; and this he repeated to Booti with great earnestness. Then he asked if she lived in a house like his, or like the one the magistrate had built at Taungs (which, I believe, is a galvanized iron structure with a veranda). I was rather staggered, and said her house was more like the magistrate's. Then a feeling of remorse rushed over me when I remembered the noble pile of Windsor, and I hastened to add that

at all events one house was not enough for her. To my surprise, this caused the greatest excitement. I found out afterwards that Kaffirs build a fresh hut for each wife, and James had jumped to the conclusion that if the Queen had many houses she must have many husbands, which did not tally with what the missionaries had told him. He asked me also how many head of cattle she had, and I said her cattle-posts were across the sea, and all over the world, and that James himself could not count them.

As I sat there looking up at one clear star which shone occasionally through the smoke, dark faces peered in and vanished. I felt the deepest compassion for James, who, I believe, longed to understand things, and to be clear how to act for the best. He might not be a man of energetic action at any time; but it seemed to me extraordinarily remiss in the administration to leave this man without advice or information about matters which he felt vitally affected the lives of his people and children, and to allow him to be dragged into action which possibly he did not desire or approve.

The next morning I went to call on the wife of the Boer. I found the lady had just moved out of a wattle and daub hut into a one-roomed house of sunbaked bricks. When I arrived she was on her knees, spreading cowdung and sand over the floor with her hands. The operation was not agreeable to watch, and the smell was most unpleasant. However, it is, I believe, the only flooring which prevents white ants from eating one up in bed, or something equally bad. She could not speak English, but she had a kindly face, and she understood my civil intention, and evidently appreciated it.

At this point James did me a service. My people were troublesome to me again, and the time had not

yet come to make them mind. When I wanted to start every obstacle was raised; the cattle, I was told, were sick. James, with a native's quickness, saw I was annoyed, and went himself to see the cattle. He assumed the air of a chief to my boys, who were relations of his, and he did this, I feel sure, to oblige me.

While I was still waiting for the oxen to come up, Booti's waggons passed me. They were followed by half the village, dancing and singing, by way of farewell to the distinguished visitor.

The next halting-place of consequence was Genesa, and I inquired at once for the police-camp, and presented my letter from Captain Macgregor.

We had been passing over farms which had been sold to Boers. On some of them Boers lived, but only people of a very low stamp. Other farms had been deserted. Others, again, only had a man living in a hut by way of occupation. For the last twenty miles the country had been very dry, and the cattle of a large area were all driven to water at some large pits near which my wagon outspanned at Genesa.

There was a wide laagte which stretched right across the veldt through the centre of the native village of Genesa. On one side was the police-camp, the store, and the heathen settlements; on the other were the Christian Kaffirs. There is a theory that this laagte goes across the country to the Molopo, and is the old bed of the Molopo, or else the dry course of a very important tributary. Certainly it is a singular thing that the pits here seem always to have water in them, no matter how many cattle drink there. Therefore it is not impossible that there may be some underground connection with the Molopo.

We had now left the Batlapin, and just for to-day

were on the territory of a small tribe called Meroquaile. They were hideous to look at—a treacherous, cruel, conceited, superstitious, dissolute race.

When I was calling on the police, I found some very nice water-colours hanging in their hut, of scenes in Bechuanaland. Some of them were the work of Corporal Taylor himself, and five others that of a curious old man who walks about all over South Africa painting sketches. He walked up from the Eastern Provinces, and was then busy walking down again. The old man's name was Alexander. There was decided character and touch in the work.

We were very short of food, but I could not make up my mind to buy meat where disease was so rife amongst cattle.

The heathen Meroquaile women were having a dance, and a more evil sight I never witnessed. They were apparently oblivious of everything, and some were foaming at the mouth. I came back to my waggon feeling fairly sick. The girls of this tribe are kept in seclusion till they marry. They are shut up in a kraal, and are taught dancing. It is very seldom that a European is permitted to witness the dancing; and if they see a man watching them, their duty is to pursue him with thorn-bushes and kill him. Only recently a white man had been attacked and nearly thrashed to death by some girls who caught him watching them. Before they are married a ceremonious dance takes place, in which the girls are dressed in dresses made of reeds, which are considered so sacred that no European is allowed to see or touch them.

The women's dance, part of which I witnessed, sometimes lasts for several days, and concludes at midnight, when a large clay ox is introduced. Round this idol

they dance and howl or sing, and the two oldest women produce assegaïs. With these they pretend to stab one another, and the dancing and singing winds up with a shrill piping like baboons. The dance which was going on at Metitong was a men's dance, and was a kind of war-dance. That is the usual men's dance; but there are others of an amatory nature, in which they wave reeds and blow through them with a whistling sound.

I had hardly settled down on my return to the waggon, when a tall, lank individual, whose very sly cast of countenance was aggravated by a squint, came up and introduced himself to me as the native missionary from Kuruman. He asked if I knew Mr. Pryce, and put on a great many airs and adopted a sanctimonious, patronizing manner, pointing to the houses of 'my people,' as he called them, on the hill opposite to the one on which the dancers were still howling.

At last I became fairly irritated, and asked him why he was not at the dance himself. He nearly sank to the earth with affected horror, crying out in a falsetto squeak:

'There! Those! They are *devils*! My people are——' And he finished the sentence with a hypocritical glance towards heaven and an unctuous smile.

'I quite expected to see you there,' I said, not minding him. 'What were you doing?'

'I was keeping school,' he answered sweetly, and then he repeated the word 'dance' to himself with a shudder.

'I would have gone to see your school if I had known you had one,' I said.

This I was fervently begged to do, but, as I fully expected to leave at daybreak, I told him it was impossible.

Then came a native woman to sell me eleven eggs for sixpence, and Monkeran, who had not had time to recover from his fits of delight at the missionary, was further upset by the woman gravely asking if my six-penny bit was a bad one.

All day long the herds came and went across that immense plain to drink at the pools. Some were so thirsty that they finished the last stretch with a run, and walked far into the liquid, as though to soak themselves in it.

In the evening, as the sun went down, I saw Commandant Portal ride up to the police-camp from Morokwen. The next morning, before I was up, he came down to my waggon to say that he was on his way back, and hoped to see me at Morokwen by the end of the week.

My boys were thoroughly slack, and my transport rider did nothing but sleep. The oxen were 'lost' again, and yet I knew that I must put up with this till I reached Mr. St. Quentin's, which was our next halting-place, and a very short trek. By way of killing time, I went to look for the native missionary's school, and, to my amusement, I found the gentleman lounging about outside doing nothing.

'How's this?' I said. 'Where's the school?'

'Oh, missie, I am sick!' and he began rocking himself backwards and forwards and groaning, till it made me feel sick to look at him.

'You must have some medicine at once,' I said.

He declared he had none; but this I did not believe, and presently he produced a large medicine-chest. Half the Christian population came to see what was happening, so I said to them:

'This poor man is sick, and I, who am a friend of Mr. Pryce, am going to cure him.'

I took out a large bottle of Gregory powder and put two handfuls of it into a pannikin of water, and beat it with a twig till it frothed. Then I made him swallow it, which he did with many splutters and gasps, crying out as he gave me back the pannikin :

'Oh, missie, I am better ! I am better !'

'All right,' I said. 'Mind you keep school to-morrow.'

I was told that this Kaffir was paid £40 a year for keeping school.

Early that afternoon Mr. St. Quentin rode up to my waggon. He had seen Mr. Manning, and heard that he was to expect me. After a little general conversation, he rode away, saying, 'At sundown, then, I shall expect you.' We were kept waiting for the oxen so long that I sent Mr. Covernton forward on foot to let Mr. St. Quentin know I had this uncertainty to contend with. It was dark when Pfoul arrived with the span, and then he said one of the oxen was ill, and could not move its hind-legs. My transport rider declared it would be impossible to trek. I took a light, and saw to my satisfaction that all the oxen walked to get their drink quite easily. I therefore pointed out that if we did not trek there and then, the police should communicate with Mr. St. Quentin. Then I was told that the gear had broken ; but my hint about the police and Mr. St. Quentin scarcely needed repeating. I merely shook my head, and said firmly, 'We go on to Mr. St. Quentin's at once.'

Once clear of the native village, the oxen started off at a brisk trot, and we did the trek in a good deal less time than I had allowed for it.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM GENESA TO MOROKWEN.

UPON reaching the Request, I went in at once to Mr. St. Quentin and explained matters to him. He is called by Kaffirs 'the Silent Man,' and the name suits him exactly. He answered briefly that he did not think I should have any trouble in future, and that I had better make it plain that I did not mean to.

That night was intensely cold. The next morning there were about 4 inches of ice in the waggon-pail. Such frosts are very unusual in Bechuanaland.

I found that the farm was situated on the top of a high hill overlooking a valley, which seemed to be the dry bed of a once mighty river.

After breakfast I gave my transport rider a talking to. Shaking the stick in the air is a thing to be avoided, but he understood perfectly well that the magistrates and police would bring him to book if he gave me any further trouble. He was instantly cowed, and with one exception I am bound to say behaved well for the rest of the journey.

I found that Mr. St. Quentin complained a good deal of different diseases, but not the dreadful makokomalo. He was very averse to the burning of grass, attributing to it an attack of black-leg amongst his calves, and added, 'I haven't a doubt that burnt grass on rocky

soil produces a lot of sickness. It destroys the phosphates in the grass.'

We walked down to see his well and dam. The well was about half-way down the hill. It is 60 feet deep, and Mr. St. Quentin said it cost him £1 a foot. There was a strong supply of water bubbling up in it.

The dam was down in the valley. Here the soil was very dark, containing a good deal of lime, and some stiff yellow clay. The dam covered about 200 yards by 300, with a sheet of pure, sparkling rain-water. As we walked along the shore, it reminded me very much of the artificial waters in many Essex parks. The dam was constructed of stone, and was a great piece of work. In the centre of the dam the depth was sufficient for Mr. St. Quentin to take a header. He dwelt very much on the superior wholesomeness for cattle of rain or dam water, remarking that cases of illness on farms were nearly always where cattle had spring-water to drink.

I told him of Count Plater's theory of goats, sheep, and kine being fed in rotation, and he said he thought such a plan would probably save a good deal of loss.

As we walked back again, Mr. St. Quentin pointed out to me different grasses, rushes, and thorns, and told me of their several advantages and disadvantages. He also gave me what I think is the most reasonable explanation of the barbel mystery I have heard yet.

It is always an insoluble riddle how barbel get from one place to another, and sometimes into places where fish could not climb. The Boer idea is that they are rained down in the rains. Others say that they travel over the veldt. Others, that they can sleep like toads buried in the mud, and remain so for unknown ages, and revive when water touches them again. Certainly barbel

have been dug up buried 3 feet deep in mud, which on the surface was hard and cracked; and these barbel have been alive.

Mr. St. Quentin's theory is a very simple one. It is that the kingfishers, cranes, and other fish-eating birds carry the spawn.

Mr. St. Quentin had been four or five years at his farm, and this was the first year in which he was able to see any profit. His difficulties with regard to water had been very great. He had bought the farm from Government cheaply, as a dry farm, and he said it would be difficult to estimate the outlay. The dam had been a very expensive matter. He thought that it—together with well-sinking—had cost him £200 a year hitherto. A farm of 4,000 morgens in Bechuanaland, with water upon it, would easily fetch £1,000. Without water it might be had for the upset price of £250.

Mr. St. Quentin was still bent on deepening his dam, with the intention of growing green crops by irrigation for dairy stock. He was also preparing the soil for a garden round his new house, and an orchard. He told me that the great want in Bechuanaland is a good winter fruit—an apple—but he did not think it had been tried yet. Oranges only answer in certain localities, as at Kuruman, and then they are not the best kinds. He said that he intended to try a vine on a trellis for his stoep, like the one at Metitong. He complained very much of the natives being untrained, and allowed to do nothing. He said that they would make good masons or carpenters if only they were taught. The Batlapin are clever enough for anything, but they will not work, the old idea being in force, that the women are to do all the work.

Mr. St. Quentin railed against the folly of those who come into the country with wives and families and cattle before they have put water on their farms, or found it there. Of course it is execrable folly; for there are farms upon which water cannot be stored owing to the porous soil, where there is no river or spring to dam, and where not even the Government bore can find a spring.

The style of farming practised by Mr. St. Quentin is cattle-ranching. I saw a fine herd of cattle going by from drinking, but they were only the mixed Afrikaner, Kaffir, and Friesland nondescripts of the country. He had not yet begun to form a special breed after the manner of Mr. Cullinan.

There was some delay in starting from Mr. St. Quentin's, as Pfoul did not bring up the cattle. Mr. St. Quentin looked through his spyglasses, and presently I saw him despatch a mounted messenger with a shambok and private instructions. In an incredibly short space of time my cattle came up, and Pfoul was visibly agitated. My cattle were never 'lost' again, nor did the gear 'break.'

As we went off down the hill from the Request, two policemen rode up. They were Commandant Portal's men, and had come down from Morokwen, and would pass me again going back to make sure that I was on the right route.

It was late when we started, and we had a night trek before us through thirsty land till we should reach the next water. I mention the annoyances I was subjected to, partly because they are the common experience of those who travel by ox-waggon and show the inconvenience of this method, and also by way of offering an

apology that my work was not better done. With worries of the kind to contend with single-handed, it was not easy to give one's mind to business. Naturally the unexpected delays, and frequent stoppages at mere native posts, frequently reduced me to straits as regards provisions. There was sulkiness, indolence and slackness in getting my meals. Sometimes the oxen were not turned loose till nearly eight o'clock in the morning, and sometimes it was past eight before I even had my coffee. Only on rare occasions would Pfoul trouble himself to herd the cattle at night before tying them to the gear. I found that the quickest way was to cook the food myself, and this and bread-making took a good deal of time. Henceforward Mr. Covernton baked and cooked, and the threat of a sound thrashing improved my transport rider's temper, controlled his language, and offered a useful hint to the 'boys.'

There had not been much game. Mr. Covernton had shot a few partridges and pigeons; but we had not seen the buck, which before we started were reported as so numerous.

The night trek from here was intensely cold. The way lay over deep sand, and having put Bovril and a captain's biscuit ready, I rolled myself in my wraps and tried to sleep. Mr. Covernton took blankets on to the waggon-box, and at midnight, when we outspanned, he lit a fire and heated the Bovril, which with some whisky was very acceptable. The boys slept by the fire till daybreak; then they made themselves some coffee, and we went on again.

At about ten o'clock the next morning we outspanned for breakfast. The cattle walked away, eating greedily of the tall, sweet veldt. After about an hour's halt we

went on again. The sand was deep, but as my waggon was empty, it did not sink to the half-spoke common to traders' waggons on that trek. I was lying down reading, when we came to an abrupt halt. Mr. Martin Theal had drawn up in his Cape cart, and jumped out of it to come and speak to me. His father had written to him about me, and he was on his way to Vryburg, where he hoped to see me at the end of my trek. He had been busy measuring out 6,000 morgen for new settlers, and told me that land in Bechuanaland was being rapidly taken up by Boers from the Free State and Transvaal. He spoke of them as 'excellent pioneers—men who come in and live on next to nothing.'

I asked why they had trekked so far—far from markets and their own people.

'Because they want more room,' he said. 'They are a nomad race, and already some of them are moving away—over there to Namaqualand—after the big game. They find themselves cramped here, and they do not like law and order and gun-licenses.'

Mr. Theal's views were very favourable to men with a little capital and small holdings. His argument was that the price of cattle depended upon the natives. If the Kaffirs began to sell their enormous herds, the price of cattle would at once fall to nothing. He therefore advocated tobacco-growing, saying that this country was the finest country in Africa for tobacco.

After leaving Mr. Theal, the trek continued over the softest sand—on either side beautiful sweet grasses, standing above my shoulders, sparkling in the sun, and relieved by bunches of the soft, white-blossoming Vaal bush—an ideal cattle country, but it was a 'thirst.'

The silence was suddenly broken by a loud roaring

and hissing, and the oxen had to be flogged forwards. The veldt was on fire, and it met us, stretching a long, snaky length on either side of the road, travelling at a fairly uniform rate of about three miles an hour, as nearly as I could judge. It was a marvellous sight. Here and there, where it met a dead tree or dry bush, it shot up with fierce triumph, tearing up into the air with a shrill whistle, and shooting long tongues of flame into the sky. I ran across the veldt to see what it felt like to meet it alone upon the veldt. Every now and then birds rose up forlorn and terrified, whirling up into the air, but, encountering the smoke, and being unable to breathe, they fell again into the burning mass. Locusts, both the scarlet and the gray kind, shot up like squibs here and there, anywhere, and fell stunned and stupefied. Overhead, but quite low down, a gigantic vulture was poised. He perched on a tree, looking eagerly down at the approaching line of fire. He was the incarnation of a cynicism very proper to the occasion.

I ran through the fire easily, and did so without being at all burnt, therefore I do not believe that there is so much danger in these veldt fires as some people represent.

Shortly afterwards we reached a large pan of water, and camped there for the night.

It had a strange effect when one waggon passed another at night. In the deep sand over which we had passed people trek at night to save their oxen, and waggons make no noise. The first indication of their approach was the cracking of the whip and the wild screech of the Kaffir shouting to his oxen. Then the heavy breathing of the span, and the rattle of their

wooden yokes, and the great machine piled up with hides or merchandise, looming large in the moonlight, came on creaking and groaning. Kaffir would shout to Kaffir as they swung past, with an inquiry whence they came and whither bound, but who the people might be, what their interests or objects, even their names, we did not know—nor did they know ours.

A Boer from the Transvaal came to my camp for coffee. He had just trekked up with his 'friend' from the Transvaal, and had bought land. Even though it was dark, I could see in the camp firelight that the Boer was shabby and poor, and the 'friend' was smart and a Jew.

Afterwards, as we sat eating grilled Namaqualand partridge, which is a kind of sand-grouse, another Boer came up. He was a fine-looking old fellow, with a face like an English squire.

The next morning, thinking to return the visit, I walked to a waggon about 200 yards from my own. I found it belonged to a young Free Stater, but the old Boer was there. The surveyor had come from his camp near by. He was busy locating the different parties according to Mr. Theal's directions.


I had a chat with the young Free Stater, who could talk English well. He had come because land was cheap—only eighteenpence a morgen—and he thought 'a man might live here very well.' From that I concluded that he meant his gun to supply him very largely. In the Free State they wanted £1 10s. a morgen, and the land up here was good land. All it wanted was water, and he had got water on his land. I asked him what he expected his outlay to be. He said £200 for building a house, and £200 or £300

for cattle. He was a neat, spruce little man, and everything about his waggon was smart and business-like. He had brought some poultry with him, a dog, and a cat. All his animals were very tame and friendly, and had their pens and baskets, which they knew, and into which they went for travelling. Even the poultry seemed to grasp the situation, and did not stray too far.

The surveyor knew a good deal about the country. Whether he intended it or not, he gave me the impression that the Eastern Provinces were better suited for Englishmen than the wilds of Bechuanaland.

After breakfast I walked, as I thought, to the Boer's camp. There were half a dozen tents and some waggons by the side of a large pan, and about 100 head of miscellaneous cattle, none of which looked much good.

On one side a group of men and women were busy disembowelling an ox which they had just slaughtered. Their implements were pocket-knives, case knives, and an axe. The carcase was still warm, and I could not help thinking a cruel murder had been perpetrated. There was something unnecessarily savage about the women; their countenances were revoltingly brutal, and they were hideously ugly. They stared at me with their cunning little slits of eyes and wide Gargantuan mouths, apparently lost in stupefaction. I had a strong feeling that they wanted to be insolent to me, and might even use violence, but something restrained them. Then I suddenly found, standing close behind me, the old Boer from the waggon of the Free Stater. From the way he spoke to them, he appeared to be rather an authority amongst them. Unfortunately, he could not speak English.



I wanted very much to find the Jew and the Boer of the previous evening, but this old Boer, who understood what I wanted, gave me to understand that the distance was very great. I shook hands cordially with this old gentleman, who came a few steps with me across the veldt to my waggon.

Our way onwards lay over sand, with the overhanging branches of mimosa thorns scraping the tent of the waggon. I did not care for these low Dutch, and was not very sure that my transport rider, with whom they always appeared friendly and confidential, might not draw me up for the night at one of their settlements.

Just before reaching Morokwen I was told that there were lions in the bush, and this seemed to disconcert the boys. At length we turned a corner, and the great pan of Morokwen lay before me in the valley; and, to my great satisfaction, I could discern on the opposite hillside a ragged thorn-pole, on which hung a Union Jack.

The scene was a very wild one. The pan lay in a tremendous hollow, and into this we descended, the waggon-wheels sometimes sinking into deep sand, and sometimes crashing over limestone rocks. I felt instinctively that once, ages ago, this place was one of those depths of the sea which are found in the ocean miles below the surface. The ocean was gone, and all the water left lay in the salt pan before me. A blood-red sun was sinking fast by sudden jerks below a heavy purple cloud, and an awe and doom as of death itself lay over the naked earth, the bitter waters, with the white crust of salt about the shore, and the bleached and wizened thorns. This country seemed only fit for savages and wild beasts. Native women clad in skins

walked to and fro with pitchers on their heads, which in the distance added to their height and made them look grotesque. They went to the pools of sweet water hidden in the rocks. Dead silence reigned when we drew up to look for an outspan. The only signs of civilized habitation were three square huts, two white tents, and the pole on which hung the Imperial flag. This was the police-camp, to which I was bound, the extreme outpost of the Empire on this side. The waggon drew up between the camp and the shore, and I went at once to deliver my letters to Commandant Portal. He had gone out shooting, but was expected back very soon.

The next step was to find the store and lay in supplies, of which we had run very short. It was quite dark when, preceded by a Kaffir bearing my purchases, I got back into camp; and the first thing I did was to fall over a handsome present of game which had been sent by Mr. Portal.

Mr. Covernton presently arrived with milk and a fowl, but no eggs or bread. However, I had secured some beef—the first we had tasted for weeks—and as it had been slaughtered for the police-camp, I believe it was wholesome. Soon we had a beefsteak and onions hissing on a gridiron; and tea was being brewed on the box of the waggon, for, as usual, we were terribly thirsty.

Mr. Portal presently arrived, and stayed with us while we feasted. It was especially pleasant to meet him, as we had known each other's families in England, and it seemed to bring the old country back to us very forcibly, even in Bechuanaland. After dinner he left us to write out some letters and despatches which he was sending into Vryburg at sunrise the next morning. I

was glad of the opportunity to send a letter home ; and remained sitting under the sail of the waggon writing by the light of a candle stuck on the provision-chest as long as the cold would let me.

Mr. Portal said there was a report that seven lions were in the bush, having come there recently ; but he could not say how much truth there was in it. If they were there, it would be next to impossible to get them out, unless they came out of themselves, which he thought less probable than that they would go away again—if they were there at all. Even this did not calm my boys, who were uneasy and miserable, and seemed afraid to go to bed.

Mr. Covernton had made some bread, and I determined to see it baked. We had no baking-powder or yeast, and made shift with Eno's Fruit Salt, which was not a bad substitute. After the pot was on, Mr. Covernton walked up to the camp to see Mr. Portal, and I sat alone by the fire.

It was a very bright moonlight night, and the waters of the great pan looked clear as a sea of glass. Odd cries and howls came sometimes from the native village beyond the police-camp—sometimes the baying of a dog at the moon ; and again silence, broken only by the distant yapping of jackals or howling of hyenas. In the horizon a lurid glare lit up the sky from the veldt fire, which was still raging in the country beyond the bush.

The boys and the transport rider lay under their blankets, and now and again I saw the corner of a blanket raised and a dark face peering out to see what I was doing and if I were there. I sat still, except when I threw more fuel under the pot, doubtless afford-

ing their poetic brains material for a new song about me, which they would sing as they drove the oxen next day, emphasizing its best points by lashing the poor brutes. By degrees they settled down and slept, and I know they were tired.

I was glad of a little time to myself in which to think uninterruptedly. The strain of the last few days had been great, and the physical fatigue depressed my spirits. This, I told myself, was really Africa—Africa as people at home could not know it ; Africa as even many colonists did not know it ; Africa as the trippers and tourists who rattled through the country by train from one big town to the other never knew it, though they went home and wrote about it.

Then I asked myself how many Englishmen, or even Scots, could come here to grapple with this wild, savage country ? Boulder and rock and sand, heat and cold, hunger and thirst, and, above all things, loneliness ; yet those who were there had no wish to go home. Then a story which I had been told came back to my mind, and I could not get away from it. It was one of those sad cases of a young man whom doctors had recommended to try the South African climate. He came up there to the high veldt, and, getting worse rather than better, sent for a friend who was a doctor. This man told him that he could never recover, though he might live three years. He had a little money, but not enough to take him home—hardly enough to keep him for three years, unless he could augment it. He would not write home for more, nor could he get any occupation. He made up his mind to *drink himself to death*, on the principle of a short life and a merry one.

It was not a heroic resolve, but when I thought of

the awful prospect of a lingering death in this country, away from friends, destitute of comforts, with the dread of debt always hanging over one, I could not blame—I could only pity the man.

The end came rather sooner than he expected, and when they told him, he said, 'Thank God!' The missionary came to see him, and he said, 'Don't you pray for me, Mr. —; but just get your Bible and read the bit about Jacob's dream. That's all I want to hear.'

It was his last request, and I thought it far from strange, though some people said he was light-headed. I could fancy how he sympathized with the weary man who lay down to rest in a strange land, with a stone for a pillow, and dreamt, by God's mercy, a dream of consolation. The ladder between heaven and earth, the dazzling light shining on it from another world, and the angels of God coming and going upon it. Even so would he, too, fall asleep, *and dream*.

But the young and healthy and strong who poured out their lives, what a history they wrote in this our colony!


Relentless and savage land, which has demanded the life-blood of the best and bravest! Still, a land to wonder at, and, once laid hold of, not to be lightly or easily let go — if for no other reason, because of the discipline it enforces. A rude mediæval school, where men fight for ideas bravely, doggedly, and die with simplicity, because they have learnt here, if they did not inherit the instinct, that it is easier to die than to be a coward. What a noble army will answer to that roll-call in 'kingdom come' when the conquerors of Africa are summoned in their order! Mothers—even if they have

but one son—need hardly grudge him a place there, it to lose him means to remember him as—

‘ One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward ;
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed though right were worsted wrong would triumph ;
Held, we fall to rise again ; are baffled to fight better ;
Sleep, to wake !’

There is nothing which gives one a more human feeling than Africa, and the scenery enables one to grasp and understand human nature in a way that nothing else can do. There are many things that the wisdom of big cities does not contain, which are yet to be picked up on the African veldt ; and after a while, as one realizes this, there comes over one a sort of contempt for the narrowness and ignorance of the old life at home.

Perhaps the best of the new knowledge is trust in human nature, and especially British human nature. There are many men to be met with in Africa who are no saints, some even for whom it would not be desirable that they should try to return to the ways of civilization from which they have transgressed, and to the society they have offended. Yet there is another side to their character which is eminently suited to South Africa. South Africa is glad to have them, and would be the poorer without them. It is said that women are at the bottom of all the mischief under the sun, but a young man may fall into a scrape as a youngster, partly through inexperience, or perhaps through sudden unaccountable cowardice, in matters where women have no concern. Broken hearts are things of rare occurrence, but blighted prospects are an everyday matter ; and many such, from one cause or another, find their



way to Africa. Sometimes I have thought that the brilliant prospects we hear so much of, as lying before our colony, are built upon other people's blights.

Here is a land where there is urgent need for all the manly qualities of man, and no room for anything else. It is a loud call, and scores of men respond to it, whose services at home would be declined with thanks, because interest or money are picking out the plums, and these men have neither. Nevertheless, theirs is the nobler and the better way to fame and fortune, and it is the old way of our British ancestors, let us call them filibusters as much as we will.

It is said that they are rough. It is also said that they are bad. This was not corroborated by anything I encountered. On the contrary, it would have been impossible for anyone to have met with more chivalrous kindness. Yet again I say many of these men were no saints. The fact is, good men are always rare in the world. We are made so, or the Bible could never have been written, or, at any rate, we should not have it in its present form. 'That which the Lord hath made crooked shall no man make straight,' and sometimes I think that this law refers to a certain order of badness which is better than much respected goodness. But all men alike are so constituted that the worst of them has known one woman in his time whom he respected. It does not follow that she was the one he loved most. She was certainly not the woman who turned his pockets out, and on whom he squandered his last shilling. Perhaps she was his mother, or she may have been only a friend or cousin. Yet godless and godforsaken though he may be, wherever in the world he comes across a woman who has that indescribable something

about her which recalls the one he once knew, that woman will be perfectly sure of his kind and respectful help and assistance, given even before it is asked. And that much, to the credit of men, is as true in these 'new' days as ever it was in our grandmothers' days, or 'the old times before them.'

Meanwhile, the baking of the bread was not a success. What happened remains a mystery to this day. But when Mr. Covernton raised the lid, whilst I held a match, a dark, chocolate-coloured shining lump lay at the bottom of the pot.

'It looks perfectly mad!' I exclaimed.

'Yes, it does,' returned Mr. Covernton, anxious to blame the loaf. 'It's turned into a cake, that's what it's done,' he added, with intense contempt.

'Shut down the lid,' I answered. 'Any way, it shall be baked. Remember how dreadful that last unbaked bread was.'

Afterwards we sat in silence a few minutes, for it was terribly grave to be near the end of our biscuits, and with no prospect of bread. Besides, it was getting near midnight, horribly cold, and we were very tired. I decided to put the loaf away and look at it by daylight. Therefore it was thrown into the provision-chest, on which my hold-all rested by way of pillow, and climbing in among my karrosses and blankets, I was soon fast asleep.

The next morning I woke just as the sun was shining over the thorn-bush on the hill, and, pulling the sail aside, I saw them hoist the flag at the camp.

'How those colours have been carried
Needs no verse of mine to tell ;
How the brave around them rallied,
How the brave beneath them fell.'

No one at home can tell what a cheering sight it is to see that flag fly out in the breeze, or the sense of security it gives here in such a wilderness as the South Kalahari desert.

The Kaffirs were restless at Morokwen, and the previous week there had been talk of a rising. Captain Styles had come down from the Molopo, and the police-camp was barricaded. The cares of the situation nevertheless sat lightly on the Commandant. 'Kaffirs are all right,' he said, 'but you must always let them see you can go one better than they can.'

I believe it is untold how many scrapes Great Britain is saved simply by British pluck. But putting this young fellow with ten policemen in these little huts and tents, to keep some 2,000 or 3,000 Kaffirs in check, was a thing that only Great Britain could do with impunity.


After breakfast Mr. Portal and Mr. Covernton shot sand-grouse as they flew overhead. They evidently came from a great distance, probably for water. They flew at a tremendous pace, much after the manner of pigeons, but very high up. Two or three dozen brace were soon knocked down, and made a welcome addition to our supplies for the next few days.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM MOROKWEN TO THE MOLOPO.

THE following day in the afternoon we started for Captain Styles's farm on the Molopo. The mails were sent down to me in a sealed envelope, for beyond Morokwen there are no posts. After leaving the native village, which I was glad to do, for these Barolong are an ill-looking, morose set, with none of the gay good-humour of the Batlapin, our trek lay over monotonous veldt. Then we passed into the forest. I saw six wild ostriches run away. It is very difficult indeed to find the right road in this South Kalahari, as the tracks cross and recross, and turn and twist in every imaginable direction. I was anxious, if possible, to reach the farm of Messrs. Macbeth and Young, but we were trekking very slowly.

That was a memorable evening. I was walking behind my waggon trying to see how it travelled by the stars; but they did not come out, and then I saw a curious thing which some people will say is another yarn. Yet I am convinced I saw it. It was a beast—a wolf, I believe—who was running alongside of me in the veldt, apparently watching me. Had I had my revolver with me then, I should have shot at it. I had only my staff. By quickening my steps a little I was



able to overtake the waggon, and I climbed into it without misadventure.

As it got darker some Kaffirs came out of the forest. It was not possible to see where they came from. First there were only one or two, but by degrees the number increased. They howled and giggled, and, as they had knobkerries, I thought they were herds. I did not like their noise or their manners. Calling a halt, I got out, and asked through my boys who they were. The answer was that they were Monshushi's men. I said they were to go back immediately, that I would not allow them to follow my waggon. They seemed amazed, and stood quite still; but presently, with loud whoops, they appeared to jump back into the forest, and I saw them no more, nor had I further trouble of the kind.

I lit two candles, as I thought it very likely that Mr. Covernton, who always walked on some way ahead, would get lost. It was now pitch dark. On either side the desert stretched for 100 miles of arid waste in which we might wander for days without water, and we had only a small firkin with us. Then it seemed as though we were off the track altogether, and, coming into the bush, we halted and camped for the night.

That evening we had an ample supper. Mr. Portal sent us a parting gift of a splendid loaf of bread. No less welcome were some maps which I lay awake a long while studying. I was not sure where we were, and had no wish to find myself among the Boers. As far as I could judge, we were far enough from any human habitation. The water difficulty was my great trouble.

I slept uneasily, listening to the jackals and wild-dogs crunching the bones we had thrown away from

our meal. I felt that a good deal depended on the sunrise, but I listened eagerly for any sound. At day-break I felt sure I heard the distant barking of a dog. Kaffirs often keep dogs, and take them with them when they go wood-cutting. At length I heard the lowing of a cow, calling her calf. If near a cow, we might be near a farm. A long time passed. Suddenly I heard very faintly the sound of shouting, which was distinct from Kaffir howling; then the cracking of whips. At this all my hopes sank, for whips would only be cracked in trekking. Then I heard chopping, and thought they were native wood-cutters, some of whom were left behind when the others trekked on. Then I heard nothing for a long time; but the sun was up, and I began to call and wake Monkeran to make me some coffee.

My transport rider declared that he did not know where he was. But I made up my mind to trek in the direction in which I had heard the sounds. They were so faint that, now the oxen were rattling the gear and people were moving, I could hear no more chopping, or other sounds either. After coffee, Mr. Covernton started to walk on ahead. Water we had enough of for one meal more with care; after that we should thirst.

It was with great relief—after we had trekked a mile or more—that I saw the commencement of a barbed-wire fence, as I knew it indicated colonists or English farmers. Presently Mr. Covernton came back with the good news that he had met a fine herd of cattle. Another mile, and we saw the welcome sight of a small house and store some way off the track. We made for this—skirting the wire fence—and more cattle passed us, driven by herds. As we drew near the house, I heard the chopping distinctly. They were chopping

up the carcass of an ox. Some dogs came out and barked. It was the farm of Messrs. Macbeth and Young, for which we were bound.

Mr. Macbeth kindly came down to my waggon to talk to me. Mr. Portal had advised him of my coming through a policeman, who was also told to look out for my waggon, and render me any assistance I might require. I told him of the sounds I had heard, of the cracking of whips, and the time by my watch. He said it was himself and his partner, who had been cracking the waggon-whip to call up the herds.

Mr. Macbeth invited me to his house, where I met his partner, Mr. Young, who had been formerly in the police and knew the country thoroughly well. Mr. Macbeth told me that he had been a trader, but that the old traders were dying out except in Damaraland, while store-keeping was on the increase. It was not so profitable a business as it had been a few years back. He said he had only been nine months on his land, and had nothing in order yet, but he had built his house and store, and had 800 or 900 head of cattle. They were of no particular breed—Damara, Friesland, Kaffir, Afrikaner, shorthorn. The first thing a farmer had to do was to put a lot of cattle on the land to trample it well down. The veldt improved every year, but a fine breed of cattle did not answer. The beasts he would choose would be Damara cows and Friesland bulls. Damara heifers can be bought very cheaply in Damaraland—£1 5s. apiece. As to disease, there had been none originally in Damaraland, but it had spread there from Bechuanaland. A point which he urged with insistence was keeping cattle on veldt to which they were accustomed. 'Although,' he added, 'I have

found a change from sweet veldt to sour veldt *for a week*, and then back again on to the sweet veldt, to be very beneficial to cattle. I give my cattle bones to eat. You may see them going about munching bones' (and this was true; I did see them with bones in their mouths, which they were gnawing). 'I also give them Glauber's salts and rough salt once a week, at the rate of 1 of Glauber's salts to 15 of common salt. My labour is a great difficulty. I cannot get good boys here. The Kaffirs won't work. My partner and I have to herd the cattle ourselves. My plan is to have a centre herd of 800 to 900; then start smaller posts, the cows at one, the heifers at another, and so on. Fencing is very important; in fact, it is impossible to do without it. It also economizes labour, which is a great advantage. There are two ways of making money by cattle: one is by cattle-dealing; that is the most lucrative at present. Men can make 80 per cent. by it easily. It requires great knowledge of the country. First you must know the country where you buy, and then the country where you sell. If you have a good farm, and you are able to buy cattle in good condition in June (they are cheap then at £5 apiece) from land which will run dry later on, you can let the cattle run on your farm till October or November, and sell them in Johannesburg for £9 or £10 apiece. That is the scarce time in Johannesburg, because the cattle in the Transvaal have to be sent to the Crocodile River and the bush veldt. Then cows bought in Damaraland are very cheap. The supply of cattle there is greater than the demand. I once knew a man who cut the throats of 600 calves because they were too cheap to be worth waiting for on the road. The main thing is to watch

the seasons and veldt in different parts of the country, and buy and sell accordingly.'

Mr. Macbeth and the other farmers I had met with had their distinct prejudices with regard to stock. In this they were exactly like farmers in England, who, it is well known, differ widely as to their preference in breeds. Mr. Macbeth did not care for Kaffir cattle. His reasons were very clear. The large horns and big bones made them difficult to judge in weight, and butchers who knew their business would give less for them. He had some remarkable cattle there, which he had traded with from Secomi's country, near Lake N'gami. Their horns were gigantic, and they had great humps on their shoulders. Sometimes the cattle have had their horns twisted or straightened by the Kaffirs. I once saw an ox whose horns nearly met in a ring; this was the work of a Kaffir. I was told that there was at one time a practice amongst certain tribes of fixing a third horn on the head of an ox on great occasions. From all this there can be little doubt that the Kaffirs have bred, perhaps unconsciously, for large horns, and consequently big forequarters. But these fancies are dying out now.

Mr. Macbeth did not lay much importance upon Mr. Theal's remarks about the fictitious value of cattle. He dwelt emphatically upon the markets and the selection of quality which was gradually working its way to the front.

'Natives,' he said, 'do not understand small sums. Pence are simply unknown here. We shall never reach small profits and quick returns till a copper currency comes in.' He reverted again and again to the labour difficulty, and spoke of importing boys from Capetown.

About noon Mr. Macbeth started with his waggon for Vryburg, and I remained at the farm making out my notes and waiting to see the cattle come up in the evening.

Mr. Young knew the South Kalahari thoroughly, and the habits and ways of the natives. He told me that there was a good deal of water in parts of the desert at a certain depth below the surface. Their own farm was situated on a tract of territory which was frequently dry on the surface. Sometimes even after a heavy rain the surface would dry again rapidly; but the further you dug the damper it became till you struck the water.

He had once had to walk fifty miles in the desert, having lost his horse. The Bakalahari or Vaalpens, who are the old tribes to whom Bechuanaland belonged before the Bechuanas conquered them and reduced them to slavery, know where water can be found, and, from having lived lives of terrible privation, are full of resources. There are plants which yield water—notably the little Kaffir melon. They will also push a reed down into the sand, and suck water up it. They have a curious way of twisting their mouths so as to suck it up with one side and spit it out into a calabash on the other. Many travellers have been thankful for supplies thus obtained. Mr. Young spoke strongly of the cruelties practised by the Bechuanas upon these wretched slaves. He showed me a little Vaalpens boy, who had run away from his master, a Barolong, and was hiding with him. I asked what would happen if the Barolong found him? He said he would have to be given up. ‘What would his master do to him?’ I asked. ‘He might kill him,’ was the answer; ‘but he would probably torture him first.’

The impression had got abroad that I was a doctor, and people were sometimes waiting for my waggon to ask for medicine. This seemed to be a retribution for my treatment of the native missionary ; for news flies fast among Kaffirs. At Mr. Macbeth's there was a genuine case of illness, which touched my sympathies. It was the wife of his Dutch man. I understood that these people were originally owners of land, but had lost it, and were now working for wages. This was a move on their part in the right direction, and I was very sorry that the man's wife, who was the only woman about the place, was ill in bed. I was asked to go and see her. Mr. Young, accompanied by his big sheep-dog, walked in front. Tall boots, breeches, a white shirt, and a big hat, disappeared into the low hut first, closely followed by the dog. I followed with a tin of mustard-leaves and a bottle of pills. The poor woman's husband followed. The little square hut was uncommonly clean, and everything was orderly. The sufferer lay in a small bed against the wall, and she was dressed, which, I believe, is the usual custom among these people. She had a pet hen for her companion, who was sitting on an improvised nest on her pillow. She laid a caressing hand on the neck of her favourite to reassure her on account of the dog, who was longing to dislodge her. I could understand nothing of the account the woman gave of her illness except what Mr. Young told me, as it was all in Kitchen Dutch. I gathered that she had caught a severe chill on her liver whilst washing the clothes of the settlement about ten days before. She was delighted with the mustard-plaster, the benefit of which remedy she had once in her life experienced before. She

swallowed a couple of pills obediently, and I withdrew. I afterwards made her some arrowroot at my camp-fire with some milk Mr. Young kindly sent me, and took it across to her. She cooed and expressed her thanks to me with warmth, and the arrowroot appeared to be a new experience. She had a quiver full of small children; the eldest, a girl, was about eleven. Such lives do these poor womenfolk live in the wilds of Bechuanaland.

In the evening the cattle herds came up, and I had the satisfaction of seeing both cows and oxen munch their coarse salts out of a trough as our cattle would eat oats. Mr. Young said they were very little troubled with disease, an immunity which he attributed to the use of these salts.

The next day one of our oxen seemed really ill. I asked Mr. Young to look at it. He did not seem to think it serious, but said it must be watched, as it might develop lung sickness. Knowing the country through which we had passed, I thought this not improbable. However, we started, and, trekking through the bush veldt, passed a settlement of Free Staters about noon. I had a little talk with those who could speak English.

They did not seem altogether satisfied with their new farm. The old lady, who had a very pleasing face, openly admitted that she regretted her old farm, near Harrismith. The young men declared that it was a very fine country for cattle, but they did not like their neighbours. I asked the names of the neighbours to whom they objected, and I was not surprised when I heard them; they were those of the men whose farms I was anxious to avoid myself. My coming seemed a surprise to them, and I do not think they had seen

many English women. They spoke cordially of Messrs. Young and Macbeth, of Mr. Portal and Captain Styles, and regretted that these last were so far off. 'We want nice neighbours near us,' they said. The old Boer himself was out herding cattle, and I left before he returned.

After this the country became broken up into small hills. I saw a hartebeest bull in the distance, and some gemsbok, but Mr. Covernton did not get within shot.

We were very anxious to get as far as we could that evening, and trekked on till ten o'clock at night. The dark comes on very suddenly in Bechuanaland, and before the moon rises there is an interval of pitch darkness. We went on like 'a ship in the night,' slowly through deep sand ; till we came to a halt on the side of what seemed a steep hill sometime about midnight.

We had dined at seven o'clock, and Mr. Covernton was full of a witch-fire he had seen. He was always full of delusive lights, which he said led him astray in the veldt. My transport rider was also given to superstitions of the same nature. While we were having dinner, Mr. Covernton observed another of these lights, and the boys and transport rider became greatly excited. I would not look at it at first, as I did not choose to encourage these delusions ; but at last I did look, and was obliged to own the light had a most curious appearance. It seemed in the sky, and it blinked and winked, bobbed and danced, in a truly unearthly manner. My transport rider and Mr. Covernton and the boys could talk of nothing else, so I decided that we would trek on, and get nearer, and see what it was. However, as we went on, it faded out. 'That is just what they do, those lights !' exclaimed Mr. Covernton.

At midnight there was no sign of this light, but Mr. Covernton heated some Bovril, and soon the camp was sleeping soundly under the frosty sky.

The next morning, immediately on waking, I tumbled out on to the veldt with a curious and uncomfortable presentiment that I might miss Captain Styles. He was the magistrate for that district, and if my ox were no better he would have to decide whether it should be shot.

While I was getting my people to start, the sudden cracking of a whip made me turn my head, and I saw a waggon coming down the hill, which I made up my mind at once was not a trader's.

It was small ; it was light ; it was elegant ; it even moved upon springs.

At the sight of this lady-like waggon, my feelings were indescribable. Was it Captain Styles ? If so, could I stop him ? But a quilt which hung out at the end decided me. It was a woman, the only other woman besides myself in Bechuanaland, and she was passing me without a word. I longed to jump up on the waggon and take a look at her, and ask her—' Who are you ?'

It travelled fast, being light, and its span of ten little Afrikander cattle bolted away with it into the plain.

My waggon hailed the driver, who responded. The waggon had left the Molopo yesterday. Evidently my transport rider exulted in the thought that we had missed Captain Styles.

The country here was most extraordinary. It was cut up by many round ironstone kopjes, bare of grass or trees, standing out of a vast sandy plain like little dough-cakes or small buns placed on a tablecloth.

After my waggon had ascended the hill, it came to an abrupt halt, and, looking round, I saw another camp, and by the fire a little elderly gentleman in a military greatcoat and a wide felt hat. Mr. Covernton, who, as usual, had walked on, came to me and said, 'This is Captain Styles.'

My relief and satisfaction were great, and, unwashed and uncombed as I was, I jumped down, and from the moment that we shook hands by the camp-fire began one of my most fortunate experiences in Bechuanaland.

I found that Captain Styles had heard I was coming, and had come out to meet me, and it was his camp-fire which provided the witch-light that had puzzled us overnight.

We agreed to breakfast where we were, and proceeded afterwards to the next water, reaching the Molopo the following day.

Limestone had completely vanished from the soil, so far as I could judge. This was simply a great waterless tract, and though the veldt was sweet, I did not believe it could be anything else. Captain Styles described to me the severe thunderstorms which made life perilous in the rainy season among these ironstone kopjes. From his account I gathered that the storms are no less severe than in the Gordonia district.

After breakfast we proceeded, and entered the confines of the great belt of forest, nine miles deep, which runs along the southern bank of the Molopo. Straight before us were some hills, which rose about 800 feet above the level of the veldt over which we were passing. In these hills, but on the other side, was our next water. There were two slits or crevices, formed by gas in the days of volcanic action, into which the rainfall

poured in the wet season. It would have to be drawn up by a bucket for the cattle to drink.

Captain Styles decided to have my ox shot, and the poor beast was led away over the veldt, and despatched with a charge from the magistrate's own rifle.

Captain Styles was hopeful about the prospects of the country. Its geological formation puzzled him. Iron was there, visibly; was there gold? What were the meaning of these old laagtes, or river-beds, which wound about between the hills? What became of the water which, in the rainy season, simply poured in torrents down the sides of the hills? Representing as he did the interests of the London and Pretoria Land Company, Captain Styles was most anxious to solve these difficult points. The forest consisted of remarkably fine camel-thorn trees, underneath which grew a thick bush of thorns. It was impenetrable, but there were tracks forced first by the jackal, afterwards by the Vaalpens. These people had long known of other pits, or rather gas-holes, and Captain Styles was desirous of seeing them. He had bribed a native to tell him, and when I met him he was trekking to find these reservoirs. There were koodoo and hartebeest in the bush as we passed along, and the trail of serpents which had left their pattern in the sand. There were also strange birds of all sorts, some of very brilliant plumage. It was a very novel experience, sitting on the box of this waggon and seeing the oxen force their way after the Vaalpens who was Captain Styles' 'vorlooper,' with the impenetrable bush on either side. It seemed that no other waggon had ever passed this way, and we were rewarded when, after climbing another ironstone kopje, we found the gas-holes partly filled with water,

and turned to look over the magnificent view of the forest as it stretched away into the great Kalahari desert on the further side of the Molopo.

The forest contained small hidden clearings, where natives could feed their cattle without being seen, otherwise it was uninhabited.

That evening we spent a very pleasant time by the camp-fire, and talked of many things. Then I learned that the waggon which had passed me in the morning was that of Mr. Scott, the Government Inspector of Forests; and that his waggon had been built some years ago for an old Dutch lady, who used it to go to church with every Sunday. It was sold at her death, and bought by the inspector.

The other side of the camp-fire lay Captain Styles' driver and vorlooper, a Barolong and his Vaalpens slave. This couple seemed on good terms with one another; but the Barolong never hesitated to cut his slave with the waggon-whip, indicating thereby to which side he wished him to 'loope.' Though the boy winced, he uttered no cry, and did not seem surprised. He lay there on the bare ground beside his master, with not even a blanket to cover him.

Captain Styles had found that it did not answer to interfere—in fact, that it was even dangerous to do so. Unless the slave could be taken quite away from the country, he would be followed, and either kidnapped or murdered. A punishment for any favour shown inevitably overtook the slave, who would be taken into the forest and burnt, or exposed naked and bound upon an ant-hill. Captain Styles found that the best way was to give the Barolong something, and then trust to his handing the old thing on to the Vaalpens.

The logs from the primæval forest made a splendid fire. A great picture moon came out and sat above the two waggons, and we talked of home and Piccadilly, and adventures on the veldt, and the great Kalahari desert, till a late hour.

The next day we reached the Molopo, and found the settlement of Captain Styles and Co., like a sudden busy scene of very primitive life. Young Mr. Northcote and Mr. Gammon were occupied in making bricks. Mr. Mee was thatching the fowl-house. A Dutchman and a well-digger, called Sullivan, were trying to empty the new well, but the water came in faster than they could get it out. It was quite a scene of settlers' life, and the house of wattle and daub, with its thick thatch, was perched on a slight elevation above the bend of the Molopo, and looked out across a view not unlike many a nobleman's park at home.

I delivered my mails with a sense of relief, for I had felt the responsibility, knowing how easily things are lost out of a waggon.

CHAPTER IX.

THE KALAHARI DESERT AND THE BANKS OF THE MOLOPO.

WHILST staying at New Barnet I crossed the Molopo, and went a day's trek into the Protectorate, with Captain Styles, Mr. Gammon, and Mr. Covernton. It was a terribly hot, dry place. Never before had I felt the feeling of human insignificance and impotence which came over me there. I seemed for the first time in my life to hate and fear Nature. The lightning-struck trees, the sharp thorns, the whirlwinds, all helped to accentuate the hard, grotesque lines of the scenery. There was no track, but the Barolong driver seemed to understand where he was going, and how far it would be safe to proceed.

One morning a young koodoo bull ran round my waggon with all the population of New Barnet in pursuit. One afternoon I took down my blankets to the Molopo, rigged up a hartebeest tent, and arrayed myself in costume suitable for bathing. I thoroughly enjoyed my splash, but I was told afterwards that the pythons there were numerous, and that bathing is not really safe. I did not repeat the experiment.

Before I left New Barnet the terrors of the Kalahari desert were brought home to me very forcibly by the

arrival of a Boer, who was the first to return from the N'gamiland trek.

I was enjoying an early cup of coffee in my waggon, when the news was brought me that a man wild with hunger, and full of the terrors of the desert, had arrived, and camped alongside of me. Soon afterwards the man, who turned out to be Mr. Le Roux, a Boer of French origin, was sitting clothed and comforted, while Captain Styles and I listened to his story, which I took down as follows :

'On February 4, 1895, an expedition, consisting of twenty-five Boers, of whom I was one, and fifteen police of the Imperial Government Bechuanaland Border Force, under the command of Captain Fuller, left Mafeking for Lake N'gami. More than a year previously Mr. Rhodes had sent a Mr. Isac Bosman, as envoy, to Secomi, at Lake N'gami, to procure a concession of land. Isac Bosman returned, saying that he had a concession from Secomi. Therefore the expedition started to select the farms. Twenty-five persons were to select 5,000 morgen each, and each of the twenty-five was to select 5,000 morgen for some other person. In this way there were to be fifty selections made altogether. We met at Mafeking. There were in all thirteen waggons, each spanned by sixteen or eighteen oxen, the police being mounted. After we had started on the second day at Ramathlabama we had a big meeting, and Mr. Hofmeyr, of Prince Albert, who represented Mr. Rhodes, gave us over to Mr. Macdermott, who took charge of us. . . . The police went with us on behalf of the Imperial Government to see that all was fair and square. The journey is 618 miles from Mafeking to the chief's staat on Lake


N'gami. The first thirst was from Morkani to Kakea, four days and four nights, 77 miles. Then nine of Captain Fuller's oxen died, owing to the boys having let them run in the thirst.' (Here Mr. Le Roux became fairly incoherent in his description of the disaster.) 'That was the hardest day in my life. When we outspanned and made fires, the oxen ran in among us to drink the fire, and then they ran to lick the iron on the waggon-wheels. From Kakea to Kokong was 42 miles thirst. At Kokong we stopped and dug a well 16 feet deep, but there was nothing but dry sand. From Kokong we had a big thirst to Isane of 85 miles, and heavy sand, in which a man sinks to his knees. Wherever the oxen see a small accumulation of people round a fire, or a few trees, they rush in, hoping to find water. From Isane we trekked to Lehutitung. There is water there. The biggest thirst of all was the last, from Okun to Lake N'gami—91½ miles thirst.

'It was due to Captain Fuller that greater disaster did not happen to us. He insisted upon waiting by the water till the oxen were thoroughly rested and refreshed. He also sent half the oxen back to one water and half forward to another, so that the water-supply, which was small at both ends, should be sufficient. Captain Fuller stopped the expedition at Lake N'gami, tying the wheels of the waggons and making a laager. Secomi was in Khama's country, and Captain Fuller had to wait till he returned. Then he went to see him, taking his police, and Captain Walsh came down to us. Captain Walsh's time is up, so that when I left he was on his way down, and Mr. Macdermott had taken charge of the trekkers. On the way up Captain Fuller was very much afraid that the Kaffirs

would be troublesome, but he sent on before to explain why we were coming. Captain Fuller went 118 miles to the staat to see Secomi. Then Captain Fuller sent back for Mr. Macdermott. Mr. Macdermott went to the chief, and the chief said, "No, I did not give my land to Bosman for the Chartered Company, nor to Mr. Rhodes, whom I do not know." Bosman had asked him to sign a paper that he would live in friendship with the English Government. Secomi said that if he were to be under anybody it would be the Imperial Government, not Mr. Rhodes, whom he did not know. Bosman had made him a present of guns, but he had given no land to anybody. There were the guns; we might take them away if we liked. Bosman gave them as a present. Captain Fuller had found out on the road, or somewhere, that there was something wrong with the concession, and that was why he said, "Wait at Lake N'gami." He says now if there is talk of anyone he hates—any enemy—that if the Kalahari were his, he would make him a prisoner there.

'On July 4, after waiting more than two months in the laager, Captain Fuller said that the best thing would be for the trekkers to return—return one or two at a time—so as not to use up the water. Food was at famine price in the camp, and his own extra supplies had stuck at Lehutitung. If we returned it would save the food, and show the Kaffirs that we did not mean to force them. Macdermott said, "No; let the people stay." We had seen the ground and selected our farms, and Macdermott gave us each a certificate for the ground selected. It was near the lake.

'I suffered greatly on the return journey. We were short of food, for the police were on half-rations, and




mealies were selling at £5 the bag when we left the camp. For the two or three days before we got here my son and I had nothing but a little piece of bread. Once we did not know where we were, and I said to my son, "Climb up that tree and see if you can sight the Molopo river." He climbed up and frightened some bees out of a hole in the tree, and he said, "There is honey there." We waited till it was dark, so that we could get the honey. Then we had honey for three days. We had very little else.'

Mr. Le Roux was a good fellow, with all the vivacity and quickness of a Frenchman. His account made me very thoughtful as to the future of the Protectorate. The Administration is under the Colonial Office, and seems a very negative affair, yet it costs the considerable sum of £100,000 a year. The land-tax amounts to £10,000; the Customs hitherto have not amounted to more than £12,000; the hut-tax brings in about £16,000. The rest is made up by the British taxpayer.

Although the Protectorate has been under the Flag for thirteen years, and during that period has been patrolled on every route by a regular and admirably-ordered police, very little is generally known of the country. This ignorance is due to its geological and climatic peculiarities rather than to its geographical position. It consists of two parts, the greater of which is known as the Kalahari Desert, a vast territory of wind-blown sand, huge boulders, and impenetrable bush. With the exception of the Crocodile and Notwani, its rivers are dry or sand rivers—that is to say, they do not run at the season when water is most necessary, and have a habit at the best of times

of disappearing suddenly. In maps both wells and spruits are scattered over the surface, but those whose fate has led them to travel in Africa know how deceptive these markings are. Pits may be dug, but dams do not pay owing to the rapid evaporation. Well-watered territory is fever-stricken and uninhabitable, though the vegetation is very beautiful, and the land fertile; but between these favoured spots and all round them are miles of barren ground where nothing grows, and horses sink to their knees in sand. There are districts where cattle can live, but not white men, and where even Kaffirs sicken; in fact, so difficult is human habitation that it is hard to imagine how the Bechuanas would live were it not for the tribal custom of slavery. For many years the Masowars, Bakalahari, and Vaalpens, who were the original owners of the country, have been habituated to live on locusts, roots, bark, berries, and any creatures, even reptiles, which they may snare. But they not unfrequently starve at the cattle-posts, where their cruel masters force them to stay. Irrigation is impossible on so sandy a soil, and if a late frost happens to destroy the mealies, a famine is inevitable.

The worst part of the country is the Kalahari, or 'No-Man's-Land,' lying to the west of long. 25°. From Ramathlabama spruit on the south to the Shashie River on the north is a strip of land, varying from 50 to 100 miles in width, which has many fertile tracts. Khama, Sebele, Linchwe, and Bathoen divide this territory between them, and keep up respectable feuds as to boundaries and cattle-posts, which are the fruitful source of Government commissions. Here is Kanya, a noted centre for native trade, and the Korwi



Flats, consisting of miles of splendid cattle country. Ghanzi, the gem of the Protectorate, lies to the south-west of Lake N'gami, surrounded by thirsts, but long noted as a sanatorium for fever-stricken traders.


The surface rights of the Protectorate are native property; the mineral rights belong to the Chartered Company. These last are reputed to be very rich, but the difficulty of working mines in a country already over-populated by natives appears insuperable. The maintenance of mining staffs at the end of 800 miles of haulage on the main line alone is a grave consideration. The Cape Government Railway reap a profit representing $8\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. The Protectorate, being under the Colonial Office, does not benefit by this tax. It is said—with what truth I know not—that the Basutos can grow wheat at 2s. 6d. a bag; but all through my trek I never paid less than 1s. for a quartern loaf of Boer meal. It is also reported that the whole territory is gradually becoming drier and less habitable. The rainfall is very uncertain.

It appears that the N'gamiland trek arose from the exertions of Mr. Isac Bosman, who interested Mr. Rhodes, and through his influence obtained the consent, and even assistance, of the Imperial Government. Mr. Bosman was very clear as to his views, and perfectly frank as to his intentions. 'The Kalahari,' he wrote, 'must be populated by Afrikanders. Water is to be found everywhere.' Then—with that touch of Biblical parallel which carries such weight with Boers—he adds, 'Men can live near wells, for we read in the Bible that the patriarchs who had farms near wells were very rich in cattle.' Mr. Bosman was of the opinion that a trekker should possess at least £800.

With Mr. Bosman was the Rev. Adrian Hofmeyr, who gave glowing accounts of the healthy uplands of Ghanzi. These two carried the trek propaganda through the Transvaal, and were so successful that a little later Mr. Hofmeyr described the trekkers as 'the wealthiest and most intelligent of the Boers,' and as not leaving the Republic through hostility to the British Uitlanders, but 'through detestation of the Hollanders, and suspicion of President Kruger's Government,' which statement is of especial interest in the light of recent events.

When once the trekking spirit of the Boers was aroused, there was practically no stopping them; but the suspicions of Imperial officials were aroused, and it was thought better to send a force of police well armed and provisioned to accompany the Boers. It was for this reason that the expedition was limited to twenty-five persons, the bulk of the trek remaining behind at Mafeking. The character of the country was well known to the police, who took with them six months' supplies, and recommended the trekkers to do likewise. So infatuated, however, were they with the glowing accounts given them by Mr. Bosman and Mr. Hofmeyr, that these precautions were deemed hardly necessary.

Now, the true facts about the Protectorate are, briefly, that water is extremely rare, and wherever it is to be had, the land, and the water on it, belong to the natives. It was not in Secomi's power to make a grant of land without the consent of his people, and that consent was never likely to have been given. That Mr. Bosman believed he had obtained a concession from Secomi is quite possible. He appears to have thought the security a very simple matter. It is not a pleasant thing to fail on a mission, especially one in which Mr. Rhodes is



interested. It is, however, conceivable that Mr. Bosman thought that a well-organized Boer trek of some hundreds of the best stamp of Boers into a native territory might be as easily managed as the trek which drove the Matabele out of the Transvaal.

But to reach Secomi's country about the shores of N'gami, a trek would have to be made across the Kalahari Desert. Besides, Secomi, and also the other Bechuana chiefs, were living and owning land under British protection, and therefore could not be hustled out of their possessions by anybody.

One point is suggested by the story, which is of general interest. It is the danger of accepting the word of a concessionnaire as to his concession, or the nature of the land he offers for selection.

That Mr. Rhodes has regretted as sincerely as any man the mistake on the part of Messrs. Bosman and Hofmeyr, which led to so much suffering and disaster, is borne witness to by the fact that he immediately sent assistance to the trekkers out of his private purse. There is no evidence to hand that either Mr. Hofmeyr or Mr. Bosman have followed suit at present.

The trek from New Barnet along the Molopo lay for some miles through the forest, and was a delightful change after the monotony of the veldt. The Molopo is one of the South African mysteries. Sometimes it ceases running altogether, and it is impossible to tell when it will begin again. When I passed there was abundance of water; in places it was deep and narrow, in others broad and shallow. Wild duck and geese abounded in deep beds of reeds, and, except at drifts, it would not have been easy to cross the river until we reached Mbuli, where these reeds appeared to cease.

CHAPTER X.

ALONG THE MOLOPO AND SETLAGOLI TO VRYBURG.

AFTER leaving the London and Pretoria Company's land, we came again upon Government land—that of the railway grant. Here I found a great many cattle, divided into herds. They were said to have come from Rhodesia, and to have belonged to Lobengula. Some of them were quarantined, and suffering from an awful disease. The vultures sat all round upon the trees watching for the wretched creatures to fall. It was said, I believe, by the Kaffirs that this disease was rinderpest. But the idea seems hardly probable. It appears more likely that the cattle had travelled some distance, seeing that they were of a totally different breed to any I had seen hitherto, and were suffering from the change of veldt. Afterwards, when I was in Natal, I saw cattle called Zulu cattle, which reminded me very much of these herds on the Molopo.

That evening Mr. Covernton shot a duck, and my waggon passed him as he was trying to get his quarry out of the reeds. When the dark came on I called a halt, and lit a light lest he should be lost again. While so doing I saw a fire shining by a hut some way from the track, and, taking Monkeran with me, I walked towards it, believing the people were Kaffirs.

I found the hut inhabited by two young Australians,

who were occupying land for someone. One of them was good enough to go at once in search of Mr. Covern-ton. They did not seem to like Bechuanaland. It was only a country for large capitalists, they said, and no one should come there without being able to reckon upon a large sum. He added, 'I and my chum are happy enough, but it's an awful country for an English-man.'

As I walked back to the waggon, I heard the strains of 'Annie Laurie' played upon a fiddle by the chum. It struck me that Afrikanders care little or nothing for music, and yet this Australian could play quite nicely on the violin. In my path I fell over something which turned out to be the dried-up body of an eagle, which was lying there with its wings stretched out as though in flight.

After Mbuli, we turned up the Setlagoli River, which was dry. We ran out of water ourselves, and the sun came out and blazed overhead, while whirlwinds tore past, carrying up dust into the air and filling the waggon with their hot breath. At length we came to some pits dug in the river-bed by Vaalpens. The water was thick and full of little animals, which kicked gaily in the clean handkerchief through which I strained the water. I boiled it, and strained it again, and boiled it once more, before making tea of it, and even then it made the tea turbid, and left a lot of mud in the saucepan. It was a severe effort of self-restraint to do all this before quenching such a thirst as I was suffering from then.

Close to my waggon there was a rough heap of sand, over which I trod in getting in and out. A Barolong who rode by with his attendant slave pointed to the heap and jeered. They had buried a Bakalahari there

the day before. How he had met his death was not revealed, though I asked about it.

This was the most arid part of my whole trek, and many farms which we came to were deserted, the dry wells bearing witness to at least one good cause. At length I reached Mr. Daly's farm, and was most hospitably and kindly received by Mrs. Daly. Late that evening Mr. Daly returned from Vryburg, and the next morning he showed me his dam and well. His farm was situated in an old river-bed, and above it was a hill of fine jasper. There were also ironstone kopjes, which rose up out of the surrounding alluvial soil as though they were still islands. Tobacco grew very well here, and the only drawback appeared to be the ignorant and unsatisfactory mode of curing. It is a crop which, I believe, locusts will avoid, and there are no hailstorms in Bechuanaland, like those in the Transvaal.

Mr. Daly employed Korannas as herds. He found them very good with horses. They speak a curious language full of 'clicks,' 'clocks,' and 'clucks.' The Barolongs here are very well-to-do. I met them driving about in new waggons, and the men are well dressed and ride on horses, with a Vaalpens as groom behind on another horse. The ironstone rocks here are full of baboons, and these creatures had lately developed a new form of mischief, which consisted in catching the goats, killing them, and tearing out the milk-paunches, which they ate. I am sorry to say that they sometimes dispensed with killing the goat first, leaving it to die in agony.

In the afternoon Mrs. Daly drove me to call on a Mr. Marshall, who occupied a small farm of Mr. Daly's, called Kingsmill. Mr. Marshall impressed upon me

that success in this country mainly depended on having sufficient capital to develop the land.

With regard to the fruit-trees growing in Mr. Daly's garden, which could be placed under irrigation from the dam, it was curiously familiar hearing to be told of the troubles of early frosts on peaches. The great thing was to hold them back, and not to allow the water to touch them, so as to press them forward. Then, when I remarked on the bushy growth left in the centre of the tree, and said that in England we should take such wood away, and allow air and light to enter, I was told that very often fruit was only produced in the centre, in the thickest part of the tree, owing to frosts destroying the blossom on the outside. Mr. Daly admitted that the *best* fruit grew on the outside, but in order to prevent himself being left without any in years of bad late frosts, he kept a number of trees quite unpruned in the centre. Mr. Daly also told me a curious thing with regard to shooting ducks. Mr. Covernton had often shot a duck and been unable to find it afterwards, although he saw it fall into the water. Mr. Daly said that a wounded duck would dive and lay hold of a stick or rush with its bill, gripping it very firmly. The reason of this he could not tell, but he had found wounded ducks drowned in this manner.

Mr. Daly also showed me some gold quartz from the neighbourhood of Vryburg, said to mill 8 oz. to the ton. There was, I found, a good deal of feeling in this neighbourhood against the Government on the score of the gold law. From time to time on my trek I had heard complaints of one kind or another, but the gold law was a distinct grievance, and the farmers considered that they ought to possess the minerals of whatever

kind on their farms. Certainly the law as it stood militated against the opening of gold-mines in Bechuanaland, and this deprived the farming industry in general of good markets. Elsewhere complaints took another form. Farmers felt that the result of being under Imperial Government was to leave them without laws to assist or, as they said, 'shove' the country along. Sir Henry Loch had been a dignified figure and an amiable person, and had occasionally visited the country. But the natives were left to do as they pleased, to increase and multiply without doing anything whatever to improve their lands or to learn trades. While some contend that the police were necessary as the only sort of native administration or agency in the country, others considered the force too large, and consequently too expensive.

It certainly seemed that vitality was sorely lacking in this estate of the Empire, but it was impossible to know who was to blame—the High Commissioner or the Colonial Office. There was failure somewhere and general dissatisfaction, but obvious hesitation to impute blame to any individual.

Mrs. Daly loaded me with gifts at parting, and her beautiful bread and delicious butter lasted us till we were within two days of Vryburg.

My next halt was close by, at Mr. Keeley's Farm Faith. Here I came upon a political meeting. Mr. Julius Weil, of Mafeking, was there to meet his constituents. This was the first practical result of the annexation which I had met with. After breakfast the next morning Mr. Keeley showed me his crops grown by irrigation during the dry season. Green barley and oats afforded capital forage for milch cattle. I also saw

tobacco seedlings and onions sprouting in the seed-bed, and a large store full of potatoes, which appear to grow well here.

Mr. Keeley owns 10,000 morgen, and goes in strictly for cattle and dairy farming. He considers that a man requires £5,000 outlay on that amount of land. He had a very fine bull, and was trying if the Hereford breed would not hasten the native cattle in arriving at maturity. A Kaffir ox takes six or seven years to mature. With regard to tobacco, Mr. Keeley agreed with my own impressions, that it required more care in the handling. He thought this difficulty might be overcome if a company of manufacturers came into the country and relieved the farmers of the tobacco in its raw state.

This was the last farm I stopped at. The rest of the trek lay across land where gold prospecting was going on. It was deforested land, and the farms were occupied by a very poor class of Boers, though some of them were not bad fellows.

At the salt-pan at Groot Chwian, where I stopped some hours and one night, I heard a good deal about the gold prospects of the country. Coal had also been discovered not far from the salt-pan, and companies were busy trying to secure land.

Mr. Buddenberg, the manager of the salt-works, laid great stress on the unsatisfactory state of the mineral laws of the country, which, he said, held back the development of the mines, and therefore retarded the country.

Very glad indeed did I feel when the last day of the trek came. The responsibility of the expedition rested upon my shoulders, and I had been very anxious


to finish it without misadventure. It was, therefore, with no small sense of relief that I saw the town of Vryburg lying before me. My boys regretted that they were to lose me. On one account they were fairly desperate : they had not given me a Kaffir name. At length the idea came to call me by my own name, which they asked the transport rider to tell them. For the last three miles they practised saying it incessantly, stamping their feet and cracking the waggon-whip to assist their efforts. Their success was not remarkable ; but should any of my readers travel in Bechuanaland, they may come upon the spoor of a white woman who was Baas on her waggon, and was called ' Missi Flayways.'

At the post-office, where my waggon first drew up, I found a large box full of letters and papers, which were most acceptable. They were the first I had had.

The next day Mr. Martin Theal drove me to call upon Sir Sydney Shippard, Mr. Watermeyr, and Mr. Newton, to whom I carried letters ; and in the evening I went on by train to Mafeking, where I stayed at Dixon's Hotel as the guest of Mr. Julius Weil.

My trek in the ox-waggon had lasted eight weeks, and I was very glad of a week's rest at Mafeking in a particularly comfortable hotel before going South by train. I also embraced the opportunity kindly offered me by Colonel Grey, who lent me his mules and cart, to drive over into the Transvaal, and visit the farm of Mr. Henry Taylor at Willow Park, near Zeerust.

In looking back upon my trek, it was impossible not to feel that the best use had not been made of this vast territory. The extent of the country is 51,538 square miles, containing some of the finest cattle country in



the world. With our teeming population, and the agricultural depression reigning in most of the counties, it is surely a most singular fact that no scheme affording special facilities to British farmers was ever attempted in this Crown Colony. It is a very difficult thing for men from the old country to start in the new without assistance; but it would surely pay on both sides if such assistance were given. As Bechuanaland is at present, it has developed more rapidly in semi-barbarous Kaffir states or tribes than in any other respect. The population has been abnormally increased by the in-pouring of fugitive Kaffirs—the offscourings of South Africa—which has lowered the general tone. The farmers who have gone there have met enormous difficulties with splendid pluck; but it is still too hard and savage a country for most men. Colonists, Orange Free Staters, and a few Scots, may fight the battle and survive—but at what a risk, and what an outlay!

CHAPTER XI.

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE CROWN COLONY.

IN South Africa there are many moot questions. There are points which, it seems, can never be decided satisfactorily ; yet there are everywhere certain leading facts which ought always to be kept in mind. It is not necessary to know all the details of the early Dutch history ; but the facts connected with such incidents as the Abolition of Slavery, the Great Boer Trek, and the signing of the Majuba Convention, should be remembered and carefully studied by everyone who means to live in South Africa. It is the only way to arrive at any just appreciation of the men who have made South Africa what it is to-day, and to be able to grapple with new political difficulties as they arise.

As I travelled through Bechuanaland on the peaceful quest of information respecting farming, I was surprised to find how much politics intertwined themselves with everything. I longed to meet with someone like the famous old squire who rode by with his hounds when the battle of Edgehill was being fought. Politics interfered with the food one ate ; they threatened interests and industries ; they divided territories, and accentuated racial difficulties. Not even among remote native tribes could one escape from 'questions.' A simple savage would be pointed out

as the pivot, for the moment, on which the fate of a vast area turned. Could anything be more remarkable than the instance which has been recently afforded us of the way African politics may affect Europe? President Kruger has known how to create a European situation out of a matter which no one would have supposed other people than British and Afrikaners capable of being interested in.

Every man who settles in South Africa should endeavour to understand the political feeling of the district on which his choice falls. He may at any time be called upon to fight for his land, his property, or his life, and he should be careful not to do so as one that beateth the air. Everywhere there is a strong local feeling, having its roots deep down in the traditions of the district, which people on the spot believe (whether rightly or wrongly matters but little) to be the true history of their country. This feature is a very recent development ; it is the commencement of South African national feeling, and as fighting lies at the bottom of it, South Africa is not unlike Scotland as we read of it in the Middle Ages.

Although Bechuanaland has not attracted as much attention as many other divisions, its unwritten history has told immensely upon the other States of South Africa. As I heard it on my trek, it seemed very stirring, and had certainly left its mark upon the people.

It began quietly enough with the missionary life at Kuruman, where the memory of one great name still lingers about the station. It is that of David Livingstone, who while living there courted his wife, the daughter of Dr. Moffat. Whatever is either good or bad in missionary life is found in Bechuanaland. But

the effect is less seen in the Christianity of the Kaffirs than in other matters in which a missionary named Mackenzie played a part, which had nothing to do with preaching the Gospel.

Strange as it may seem, Disraeli, who can have known little or nothing about this territory, possessed a distinct South African policy. Theoretically he was right. The pity was that, brilliant statesman though he was, he lacked the command of detailed facts, without which success was impossible. How often in this want of local knowledge is to be found the source of the blunders of Great Britain in Africa.

Disraeli's scheme was first to obtain the Transvaal, then to demolish the Zulu power, and extend British South Africa to the Zambesi, over the country which is now Rhodesia.

He went so far as to annex the Transvaal, in itself not an unpopular measure at the time. He then sent Captain Paterson and a man called Serjeant to the native chiefs on the Zambesi to make treaties, and propose a scheme whereby they should come under the protection or rule of Great Britain. When these men came to Lobengula, they found him complacent, and disposed to do whatever they wished. He gave his consent to their proposals, but afterwards, for reasons which have never transpired, he changed his mind. Possibly he had exceeded his powers, for it seems clear that his consent was given. A chief's powers are limited by the will of his people, and Lobengula could not act except with their approbation. He was between the devil and the deep sea, and he extricated himself in the approved Kaffir style. He allowed Paterson and Serjeant to go on, and he gave

them an escort. To this escort Lobengula gave private instructions, and Paterson and Serjeant were murdered. It was given out afterwards that they had died of poison. After this abortive expedition came the Zulu war, which was a failure, and the Government went out of office. A little later the Beaconsfield policy was demolished by the ceding of the Transvaal by Gladstone, subsequently to the defeat of the British troops at Amajuba.

Of course it is more than a matter of suspicion that in these early events the partisan spirit in home politics was even more effectually mischievous than Kaffir chiefs or Boer rifles. At all events, the feeling exists that South African interests have been jeopardized and sacrificed by party rancour and personal animosity, and that this unholy condition of things still prevails.

After Amajuba the Boers spread out over the Transvaal, and their dealings with the natives are a phase of Home Rule which it is not pleasant to dwell upon. I have seen it urged that one of the grievances of the Boers against the Uitlanders is that, owing to the high wages and increasing demand for labour at the mines, the Boers are deprived of the labourers necessary for their farms, and 'the old patriarchal regulations existing between them and their white masters are destroyed.' Those who desire to learn what the 'patriarchal regulations' were before the Uitlander was heard of can do so in Bechuanaland and the north-western border of the Transvaal. There is a side of the characters of Old Testament saints which, though it finds favour among the most religious-minded Boers, does not bear imitating in the nineteenth century. It was sufficient for me, on seeing fugitive Kaffirs running

away from the Transvaal into Bechuanaland, to make inquiries which satisfied me upon this point.

The Kaffir appears to the Boers in the light of an Ishmaelite, the Boers themselves being the elect of God, and their treatment of him is moulded upon the most ferocious commands in Holy Writ. This old mental habit of the Boers could neither be eradicated nor controlled by a Convention such as that which was signed after Majuba Hill. In spite of it, and in spite even of cabled orders from home, which the Government was too weak-minded to enforce, they continued raiding the Kaffirs and confiscating their cattle. Finding that no check was placed upon them in the Transvaal itself, they soon broke over the border, and carried their raids into the territory of the Batlapin and Barolong, carrying off cattle, and leaving ruin and desolation behind them.

Their tactics were various, but one very common practice was to pit the tribes against each other, and then sell their services for tracts of land or grants of territory. In this way the country was getting absorbed. The different stories told of that period have stamped what is now a remarkably quiet and peaceful corner of Africa as the scene of much ruffian and lawless conduct. Some of the farmers and traders still tell their experience of the days of Boers and filibusters. One trader who had assisted Monkeran, and, having had some military training, was able to advise him capably, was marked out by the filibusters for destruction. Late one night a Kaffir brought the trader warning. Forty men were to come that night, surround the store and house, which they would fire, and then shoot the trader when he bolted. That forty men should

think it necessary to come for one man seemed so incredible that the trader did not trouble himself. He was sitting in his house eating his supper by the light of a candle, when he thought he heard a noise. He got up and slipped out noiselessly by the back-door, and ran to a hut he had recently erected for his horse about 100 yards from his house. He loosened the horse's head, and watched to see what would happen. The light was still burning in the house, and the men, who advanced very quietly to the back and put fire to the thatch, evidently believed they had their quarry quite safe. Shortly afterwards the trader led his horse out, and as he galloped away he counted in the light of his own burning house forty men standing with their rifles ready to shoot him when he bolted from the flames.

There are many stories such as the above, and as they are often repeated by camp-fires, and wherever men may be in the humour to listen to yarns, the feeling that the times they refer to engendered is still warm. Among the Kaffirs, dislike of the Boers is more deeply rooted in Bechuanaland than in any other part of Africa that I travelled into.

Lawlessness began at last to surfeit people in general, and a strong and virtuous desire sprang up for law and order. Then came the establishment of two independent republics — those of Goshen and Stellaland. Among the Freebooters were some men of colonial or British extraction, who firmly believed in preserving order by means of these republics. That of Stellaland was the strongest, and its capital was called Vryburg. It struck me as a pathetic instance of a lost ideal, when I met men who talked of the republics with all the enthusiasm of reformers. Still

to this day they believe that this earth is a poorer and a sadder place than it need be because Stellaland and Goshen no longer exist. They talk of the good laws they were making with a sigh of regret for something beautiful which came to an untimely end, and one at least amongst them christened his little girl Stella in memory of the hopes for a righteous rule which gilded the days of his youth.

But these men knew nothing of what was happening upon their flanks ; and that is why they look back to the lost dream of their republic with a sense of unjust deprivation. In point of fact, it was a question of either allowing these two republics to be presently absorbed into the Transvaal, or of hoisting the British flag.

Now, there was at that time a missionary at Kuruman called Mackenzie, who perceived the situation, and attempted to move Government through Sir Bartle Frere. He also approached Mr. Rhodes, but at that time there were difficulties in Cape Colony, which necessitated Mr. Rhodes' drawing nearer to the Bond, and hope from Cape Colony was therefore impossible, as no steps would be taken by the Bond to circumvent the Transvaal.

Prior to the convention of 1884, there was an indefinite understanding that, if the country came under any flag, that flag should be British. But a new factor stepped in in the shape of the Germans, who had declared a Protectorate over Angra Pequena, and found the territory sterile. There was a secret treaty with the Boer Republic that Germany should declare a Protectorate right across the territory now known as British Bechuanaland to the borders of the Transvaal. Mac-

kenzie knew this, although the information was never made public. Germany was also sending men up to Lobengula and to the lakes to obtain grants and treaties. In fact, Bismarck was taking up the policy of Disraeli.

Mackenzie went home and agitated upon the subject. It was fortunate that there were two men in the Cabinet whose sympathies were certainly more in accord with Disraeli's foreign policy than Gladstone's, though they found themselves in Gladstone's Government. These two men were Mr. W. E. Forster and Lord Derby, who was at that time at the Colonial Office; and they gave Mackenzie their support. Gladstone's paramount idea was the reversal of Disraeli's policy at all costs. This object appears to have possessed him like a mania, and yet few among his immediate followers seemed to grasp the unreasonableness of his conduct. At length Lord Derby went down to the Cabinet with a scheme drawn up for the annexation of Bechuanaland, and insisted that it should be heard. Mr. Gladstone said, 'Put that on one side; we won't even discuss it.' But Lord Derby was firm, and was able to state the matter so strongly that the scheme was actually carried against Gladstone's wishes. The result was the despatch of Sir Charles Warren with the best troops available, and the raising of Carrington's horse.


I constantly heard the names of Carrington and Warren on my trek. Both men appear to have been well suited to the situation, which has rarely been the case with generals despatched from home. The page they wrote in Africa is one of unmixed credit to their country and themselves. The results of the

expedition were the hoisting of the British flag at Vryburg, the proclamation of the Protectorate, and the establishment of the Bechuanaland Border Police.

These are the outlines of the general facts given me during my travels in Bechuanaland. It is most probable that Mr. Rhodes was both privy to Mackenzie's intentions and also able to assist the Imperial cause to a far greater extent than is usually supposed. At all events, the history of Bechuanaland contains certain valuable lessons which such a man as Mr. Rhodes was not likely to forget. Events which have since happened point to a survival of the German policy in Africa, and it is not improbable that information was able to reach a man who, forewarned, was sure to be forearmed.

The Boer is no longer able to ride over the border and raid the Bechuanas, but I came upon several specimens of them who are settled, presumably upon land obtained somehow during the days of the freebooters ; and of these people, both as neighbours and political factors, it is impossible to entertain any but the worst opinion. Fortunately, the power of the Bond has been shaken. We have Kruger's policy to thank for that, at least ; and there is an awakening to political life amongst the English farmers and the Progressive party. The annexation to Cape Colony will only do good provided the farmers of Bechuanaland can combine to evolve a distinct forward policy of their own. And this it should be their endeavour to set about immediately.

The missionary influence which was exerted to save Bechuanaland to the British flag was really responsible for the large and valuable lands reserved to natives. On the surface, this policy appears both just and wise ;



but in reality it is neither. Had the natives been restricted, they could not have multiplied at the enormous rate of the last few years, and more of them would have been forced to come out and learn to work. Had they done so, they would have returned to their own country disciplined and instructed in improved methods. As it is, we have an overwhelming Kaffir population, brought up in absolute laziness, and ignorant of the barest and most elementary system of husbandry. Should any calamity overtake them (and one is even now at their doors), they are totally unfit to help themselves. With the most fertile lands and ample water-supply, they are content to scratch the surface of the ground for one crop of mealies in the year, and dispense with irrigation altogether. As regards cattle diseases, they are as ignorant, after ten years of Imperial rule, as they were before they came under our flag. Yet no one can blame the Kaffir for lack of intelligence. He is very quick of perception, and his powers of logic exceed those of the white man.

The colonist who goes into the country to develop its resources has to battle against absence of water (for the best-watered districts are native reserves), and has the mortification of finding his own land either too porous for irrigation or too rocky for ploughing, while the Kaffirs right and left of him are too indolent to cultivate the rich alluvial deposit on which they are permanently settled.

It is difficult to understand the ideal justice of such an arrangement. The Kaffirs have been protected from their enemies without, and from their own evil propensities at home, have multiplied at their pleasure, and call to us for food-supply when their own stores run short. Surely

something more should be required of them than the hut-tax which they pay without feeling, and which does not defray the expenses of the administration. We ought surely to have called upon them to replant the deforested areas on their own reserves, the wood of which they have ridden to Kimberley, and the value of which has gone to their own hoards. We might fairly expect them to undertake the repair and improvement of roads, the fencing of their reserves, and at least a fair amount of water-storage. They should also have paid for the maintenance of schools, to which their children might have been sent, and where they might have been trained to become masons, carpenters, or smiths.

Instead of such an active policy, Imperial Britain has allowed the whole country to lie paralyzed under a blight of utterly effete administration. The Kaffirs have put their wealth into vast herds of cattle which roam loose upon the veldt, picking up and distributing disease. The weakness of administration has recently borne its last and most evil fruit, when the ineptitude of the officials permitted rinderpest to sweep down upon the colony. Certainly no man who has witnessed the condition of Bechuanaland, and studied its history, could possibly believe that the same Imperial Power is governing there as in Egypt or in India. There is nothing surprising in the general expression of satisfaction when the Crown Colony was annexed to the Cape. To the Progressive farmers it meant the passing away of the negative rule of officials who rarely left their offices in Vryburg to see for themselves what might be done to develop the country; it meant representative government; it meant the power of making their

voices heard at least once a year in the House of Assembly in Capetown. They hoped that some form of the Glen Grey Act would be extended to Bechuanaland, and that the native and labour difficulties would thereby be relieved. The fact which confronted one at every turn was that the chief need of Africa is capable administration, an active and intelligent executive. A highly-educated and well-trained Civil Service has made India a marvel among Oriental States; but in Africa, where the difficulties are infinitely greater, the class of men selected for the service is strikingly inferior.

The way in which the Kaffirs received the news of the annexation is very significant. There had been a German trader amongst them spreading reports which no one took the trouble to contradict. It is always to the advantage of a certain class of traders to create a row upon any pretext; therefore it does not follow that this person had any political motives. He represented that the Cape belonged to Mr. Rhodes, who, if he were not Dutch himself, loved the Boers and hated the Kaffirs, and made laws accordingly. This touched the Kaffir on the raw. The memory of the raids is still fresh, and fugitives from the Transvaal add fuel to the hatred which the Kaffir feels for the Boers. Whenever Boer and Kaffir meet there is sure to be a rub, and the only chance for peace and security in Africa lies in the fair dealing under the Imperial flag. It is because appeal to Imperial authority is always possible that many agitations subside, and matters are smoothed all round. The physical change of a journey 'home' is no doubt in itself salutary, but beyond question it is the fact of the strong hand directing our men and ships which inspires respect and makes for peace. The

population in Africa is very varied. The interests are sometimes apparently conflicting. Life would be insecure and development impossible without the dominating rule of Great Britain. That rule is not represented by the mentally and physically feeble High Commissioner, but by Mr. Cecil Rhodes.

The class known as 'mean whites' exists in some numbers in Bechuanaland, and forms what criminal class there is. But a more serious matter, and one which must before long necessitate legislation, is likely to be presented by the over-mortgaged Boers. Their indebtedness is too deep to be cleared by any form of private benevolence. Their undeveloped lands also form a difficulty, and even a danger, to the better class of farmers. Were Government to pass an Act cancelling their debts or paying them off at a certain percentage, the land reverting to Government might be sold again to a better class of farmers. Some such act of clemency towards those unfortunate men, whose errors have for the most part been due to ignorance only, would, I believe, meet with general approval. There are still many of them whose backs are not too broken to make a fresh start elsewhere, were a little money given them and means for trekking provided.

CHAPTER XII.

VITICULTURE AT THE CAPE.

THERE is no subject in Cape Colony which is more frequently discussed than the present condition and future prospects of the wine industry.

The introduction of the vine at the Cape was effected by the early settlers in 1656, when a few sticks were brought from the Rhenish provinces. The first wine was made from the muscatel grape (which furnishes the rich-flavoured Constantia) in 1659, and the first brandy about twenty years later.

During the governorship of Simon van der Stell, from 1679 to 1699, immense strides were made in developing the colony. The Governor, who was one of the most able men who ever landed at the Cape, encouraged every form of agriculture and husbandry, together with tree planting. The town of Stellenbosch, named after himself and his wife, bears witness by its fine old houses, with fluted gables and wide stoepes, standing behind magnificent avenues of oak-trees, and watered by conduits of clear and sparkling water, to the development and wealth of Cape Colony under the vigorous administration of Van der Stell.*

It was during the governorship of this remarkable

* For the historical facts related here I am indebted to Mr. John Noble's 'Official Handbook of the Cape.'

man that the Huguenots came to the Cape. These families were French refugees who, for the most part, fled to Holland after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The Dutch East India Company, which at that time held the Cape, offered these 'exiles for conscience' sake' a home in their South African possessions. The offer was accepted; but the subsequent history goes on to relate that, having once got these people settled amongst them, the not unnatural jealousy of the Dutch broke out; and if ever any people endured enough to break their spirits and knock the life out of them, these 'exiles for conscience' sake' suffered it in their 'home.'

The move was a wise one, so far as the Cape was concerned, for 'among them,' says the official despatch which accompanied them, 'are persons who understand the culture of the vine.' It was subsequent to the arrival of the Huguenots, in 1689, that the Cape wines rose to a high pitch of perfection, a position which they gradually lost, and up to the present have not regained.

Yet what are the facts with regard to viticulture in the Cape Peninsula? The productive power of the vineyards is far in excess of that in any other country. The quality of the juice is superior to the European product. Neither of these advantages can be lost. The enormous productiveness of the vine at the Cape is chiefly attributable to the climate, and one eminently favourable climatic feature is the smallness of the rainfall during the ripening season. 'Only certain parts of California,' says Professor Hahn, 'and of Southern France, enjoy a climate which is similar, but not equal, to that of the Cape.' Upon the hills and slopes of

Constantia and Stellenbosch the soil is a fine mixture of sand, decomposed granite, and a little lime. In the lower or, rather, flatter land at Worcester, the alluvial deposit is enriched with a mixture of clay, slates and sandstone, and this district is preferable for brandy.

In the Cape Peninsula, Stellenbosch, the Paarl and Malmesbury, the rainfall is during the winter and spring. At Worcester, Robertson, Prince Albert, and Oudtshoorn thunderstorms occur during the summer season; but these showers do not take the serious form of the rains in Natal, so that the vintage can hardly ever be destroyed by damp upon ripe fruit. There is no question that it is in the manipulation of the juice that a great part of the wine is spoiled. The process of wine-making is undoubtedly one of great delicacy, requiring an immense experience and considerable chemical knowledge.

But the most finished method of wine-making will still be dependent upon the treatment which the vines have received. There are different classes of wines which require different kinds of grapes. Yet the same kind of grape will produce a bad or good flavoured wine according to the soil upon which it is grown. There is as much art in suiting the right kind of vine to the right soil as there is in the grading and fermenting of the wine itself. This is a kind of knowledge which can be partly acquired by visiting old-established European vineyards, and obtaining analyses of the soil and careful statistics with regard to the climate where certain vines produce certain vintages. It is possible that the subject might occupy several years, but the prospects before successful viticulture at the Cape are so brilliant that it would be worth doing. Even then considerable local knowledge would be desirable before applying the infor-

mation. The art of wine-making has been lost so far as the old Huguenot methods are concerned. Though this is regrettable, there is no reason why other methods should not be introduced better suited to modern requirements. It is still sometimes the good fortune of a traveller, who may spend one night at some remote country farm, to drink a glass of wine which belonged to the old Boer's father, but the very name of which has been forgotten. It is needless to say that this wine is totally unlike anything which is put into the market to-day. Even in this country persons may be living who remember the old Constantia—a pipe of which it was customary to ship every year for the use of our Sovereign. Its appearance on the royal table did a good deal to keep up the fashion, and our grandfathers were wont to produce on rare occasions curious-looking old bottles whose shape suggested that their maker was a tyro at the trade. The liquor contained in the handsomely crusted bottle was of a very rich colour and soft, full flavour. This was Constantia.

As the Huguenots became absorbed in the Dutch, the old care and skill was lost. Then a period of depression fell upon the Cape, after the abolition of slavery. The taste of the Boers was for sweet wine—the sweeter the better; and they cared less than nothing that the European taste set in a directly opposite direction. No wine has been imported into this country for many years, and Cape wine in general enjoys a deplorable reputation; in fact, the European market has been lost. The Boer will not study any market under the sun. He would sooner force the world by Act of Parliament to drink what it suits him to provide. It is a case of God sending the meat, and the devil sending the cook.

For it is the hand of man, and not the decree of Providence, which is to be blamed for the bad wine at the Cape, and for its rejection in Europe.

Still, there are signs of better things to come. There is a great effort, which so far appears eminently successful, to combat the phylloxera, which a few years ago destroyed many of the old vineyards. Here and there the Boers have actually roused themselves to profit by the instruction which is given gratis at the Government School of Viticulture at Stellenbosch. By degrees the vineyards are being furnished with American stocks. Of these the *Rupestris* appears to be the favourite, as suiting nearly any soil in which it is planted, and almost any vine which is grafted upon it. Experiments are constantly being made to produce a hybrid vine between the American and European which shall inherit the good qualities of both.

Especial credit is also due to the late Mr. Henry Cloete, who went to Europe to inspect the vineyards, and brought back with him the sticks of the Sauvignan Blanc in the year 1878, from which the best claret at the Cape is still made. The large vineyards originally owned by the Cloete family were purchased by Government, and the fine old mansion, with the magnificent Italian frieze decorating the centre gable of the wine-store, is now the transitory abode of Government officials. The viticulturists employed by Government appear to have at first despised the Sauvignan Blanc as a poor bearer; but Mr. Louis Cloete of Alphen was able to secure some of the sticks before all the old vines were rooted up, and thus the stock was kept up.

It is extremely difficult to give even approximate figures as to the cost of embarking upon viticulture in

Cape Colony. There is a great deal of vine-land at Stellenbosch which has become exhausted, and is no longer capable of nourishing vines for any purpose. Most of this land is flat, and a good deal of it might be placed under irrigation for vegetables or green dairy crops. For wine it does not appear to be specially suited. There is land on the slopes of the mountains, which it might pay to clear if the soil be specially suited for wine. The cost of trenching, stump-digging, etc., of virgin soil for grapes varies from £17 to £37 an acre. It does not seem probable that terrace viticulture, such as that which has covered the hills of the Rhine with vineyards, will ever answer in so dry a climate as the Cape. It is always the side of the hill which faces south which must be chosen, and shelter against winds must be provided by some means.

There is plenty of land at Malmesbury which is useless for corn, and possibly some of this might be converted into vineyards. Certain features are absolutely essential. The soil must be deep, and where it is not so naturally it must be dug out and made. It must contain no 'brak.' Wherever there is the least trace of the white powdery deposit known as 'brak,' however luxuriantly the vine may flourish, and however abundant the yield, the flavour of the wine will inevitably prove hopeless, no matter what skill be spent upon it. There must also be some shelter, either from rocks or trees, to protect the vines against the cutting winds which blow at certain seasons of the year. One very important subject in connection with viticulture for wine-making is the choice of the best manure; a change in manure will even reduce or increase the saccharine matter in the wine. Guano would, of course, be fatal.

There is said to be no harmful effect from bone-dust, but the manure most generally used at present is thoroughly-decomposed stable manure applied very deeply, so as to draw the roots away from the surface. It is a very fatal error to allow the vines to become exhausted, as it lays them open to the ravages of blight, of which there are many kinds.

Perhaps there is no case in which the analysis of soils might be used to greater advantage. There is a natural mixture of light sand and decomposed granite with a very little lime, which appears to be the perfection of soil for wine ; but it is not impossible that other soils might be improved by the artificial application of constituents with which Nature has not provided them. A good deal may also be done by suiting the right vine to the soil. The general rule appears to be that granite and a good deal of sand produce the best claret. The lighter the soil, the lighter the wine. The granite, which is eminently nourishing, adds to the body of the wine. Lime produces sugar, and if it is found in too great quantities, the saccharine matter in the wine appears to become uncontrollable by any process known at the present time. Such soils produce Pontac, which is a kind of port-wine, and the other sweet wines, which with care might become in time equal to Italian wines. The presence of clay in the soil results in so much sugar that no wine should be attempted from soils in which clay is found. The grapes may be eaten in their fresh state or preserved as raisins, or brandy may be distilled from them ; but wine would be a mere waste of time and strength.

One point is not yet clearly established, and the tendency of the age is markedly against its solution. It is how far the saccharine in wine may be converted

into alcohol. The matter is, of course, a problem for experts who have devoted years to the study of Cape wine. There are, of course, processes by which the conversion of sugar into alcohol can be hastened ; but the general evidence is in favour of the maturing effects of time, and no process hitherto discovered by science can effect the change which gradually passes over wine in the course of twenty or thirty years, provided that it is stored 'in a proper cellar. This last may seem a small matter, but it may reasonably be surmised that before long the cellaring of a good many wine-merchants at the Cape will be condemned.

Great advances have been made in wine-making during the last ten years ; but the changes are not so apparent as they might be, for two reasons. One is the immediate sale which even tolerably good wine is certain to command, so that most of it has been sold without any chance of showing what time might effect in improving and softening the flavour. There is very little wine sold at the Cape which is more than three years old, and virtually none in the market more than five years old. This is quite unfair to the colonial product. The second reason is that the wine-merchants are guilty of destroying much of the best wine by mixing a little of it with a good deal of inferior quality. This pernicious practice ruins the character of the Cape wines ; but it is difficult to see how it can be avoided under the present system.

As regards markets, let us look at any other wine-producing country, and ask ourselves where else has the wine industry received such marked encouragement. In Algiers the French have had an uphill fight for many years past to control the violent flavour of the

juice, and they have conquered at last ; but, still, there is no market to speak of north of the Mediterranean, while its proximity to Europe is another hindrance. Then, in Australia we find a bonus given by Government on wine for export which is brought up to the level of the European standard. Enormous efforts have also been made by private enterprise to lay hold of the London market ; and for this purpose the Australians have established bonded warehouses in the Metropolis, with an elaborate agency. What the results may be we have yet to see ; but this good is certain to accrue, that the wine will be improved by these attempts. From all accounts, the home market is overstocked with wines of a certain class, and on the whole those who have no other outlet for their produce than the European markets are to be pitied.

No other colony has ever enjoyed the advantage of having so large an adult addition shipped annually to its markets as South Africa. Many people who go out there have been accustomed to the best wine that money can buy in Europe, and have no wish to content themselves with second-rate produce. Wine they will have, and if the Cape wine is nasty—no matter how cheap it is—they will reject it, and try European instead. Cape Colony may enforce prohibitive tariffs, but this is part of the old unwise policy, which it is most undesirable to foster. Let Cape Colony impose what duties she pleases, neither the Transvaal, nor Natal, nor Rhodesia will follow suit. There is an even greater danger, that the Transvaal may arrange some sort of shuffle by which a bonus may be paid upon German wines coming in over the Delagoa Bay line. There are many ways by which this kind of favour can be

shown without a direct breach of the Convention. But apart from this, the taste of a market is always critical; and if once European wines, whether from France, Germany, or Italy, get a footing, it will be a tremendous task for all concerned at the Cape to make up leeway and win the top price, which pays.

Certain efforts are being made already, which deserve recognition at the hands of Government beyond the rather silly medals and prizes which seem sometimes futile, as well as monotonous. There is a hock which is turned out by some young Germans at Drakenstein, in the Tulbagh district, which is a new and promising departure. It is an extremely useful and popular wine in Johannesburg. The chief secret of the success is that the wine-makers keep the whole business as much as possible in their own hands, and thus understand as exactly as possible what development is likely to take place in their wine. It is true that they buy a certain amount of juice over and above what they crush themselves; but they are extremely careful from whom they buy, and may be considered as performing a very useful work in tuition among other viticulturists. There is a large and growing demand for the Drakenstein hock, which, though it is not a very full-flavoured wine, compares very creditably with any European brand as a sound table wine. It is now the intention of the firm to turn out a good sparkling wine, which shows that they thoroughly understand the taste of the market, for which it is their business to cater.

There are few features in South Africa which it is more agreeable to dwell upon than the Drakenstein hock, and certainly none which has about it greater appearance of an immense success in the immediate future.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FRUIT-GROWING AND EXPORT TRADE.

THIS is on the whole a highly unsatisfactory subject: In the first place, the South African fruit itself is not up to a proper level. Except in a few rare instances, nothing has been done to improve the flavour or quality of old kinds, or to regulate supplies by cultivating late and early varieties, and so maintain a supply. It is the land where fruit grows wild, and therefore no one has hitherto bestowed any trouble upon it. We know what has been done in England by improving fruits and vegetables, till every year brings a crowd of new varieties into the market, each with some peculiar excellence; and it is a thousand pities that some of this skill and judgment cannot be shipped to the Cape.

There is, however, one great difficulty in getting any returns from fruit-growing in South Africa, and this is the disorganized markets. The communication is not always satisfactory, for a bad stretch of road between the farm and the railway would ruin all but the coarsest vegetables. It is partly due to this cause that it takes a long while to get returns upon capital put into fruit.

Respecting the export trade, opinions differ as to the necessity for its development. Unquestionably there is a great deal of fruit grown and wasted in South

Africa, and as it ripens exactly at the season when winter has laid its grasp upon Europe, an export trade appears the right thing to encourage. If it is to succeed, it is necessary, first, that a kind of fruit shall be grown which satisfies the British public (and neither in the case of peaches nor grapes can it be said that this point has been reached), secondly, that it shall arrive in good condition. Now it is a matter of dispute whether the Cape fruit cannot stand the sea voyage, or whether packing has not been sufficiently studied, but the fact remains that it reaches the London market, either in a condition of extremely watery pulp, or as hard as nuts or cannon-balls, and almost equally dry. Nothing gives greater offence to Afrikanders than to tell them that their fruit is not saleable in the London market; and probably they will not believe it even though the salesmen from Covent Garden tell them so. Neither will they believe that a good part of the blame attaches to themselves, owing to the reckless and absurd manner in which the fruit is packed. They will heap reproaches upon the shipping companies, till the much-enduring officials lay bare the facts, and show that, if blame is to be attached to anyone, it must be to those who handle the products under their care before they reach the ship's inside.

The prices of garden-stuffs in Capetown are very high: 5d. and 6d. for a cauliflower is no unusual price. Peaches cost from 1d. to 3d. each, apricots 1d. apiece. But outside in the gardens the fruit lies rotting, and the vegetables are given to the pigs. The Malay middleman will not give more than 1d. or 2d. apiece for the cauliflowers, and even at the Cape they cannot be grown for that. He will offer 1s. a hundred

for the apricots. It matters nothing to him if the market is not supplied, because there is no one to compete with him in the trade. To save himself a second journey, he goes only once to the gardens, or at most twice in the week ; and as he has no other store for the fruit than the house and shop he lives in, the fruit and vegetables are kept anywhere—very often in the shop where his man sleeps at night, or under his own bed upstairs. It signifies nothing to him that his lettuces are withered, and his cabbages stale. No one will sell against him, for all the salesmen are Malays, and they are his co-religionists, and will help him to hold his own and spoil the Christians.

Worse than all is the result of the few poor attempts to break this ring by small companies or private individuals. It requires two things to break up the Malay ring in Capetown—an energetic produce company, with a capital of not less than £100,000, who should start in conjunction with the railways and certain select gardeners or farmers, with properly equipped stores and cellars ; and a thoroughly competent class of salesmen, packers, sorters, and graders. The market in Capetown is moribund, and requires galvanizing into life. It must be tickled into activity by every device known to commerce, by advertisement of every description, and the occasional sale of fresh products at less than cost price, until the public has at length recovered its taste and learned to need the things which the Malay has taught it to go without. The modern market requires a very broad base to work upon profitably. To illustrate this, let us look at a peach-tree in a garden. There will be a limited number of choice peaches, and a great many inferior ones. To make the maximum profit off

this tree, it will be necessary to find a market willing to pay 3d., or if possible 4d., apiece for the few choice peaches. They must be picked with *great* care, packed in a low, open basket with plenty of tissue-paper. The middleman must know exactly who amongst his customers has a special taste for peaches, and where there is likely to be a party given that evening. If he understands his business and manages cleverly, he will land his peaches before the very customer who requires them, and will be prepared to pay for them. Then, there are the other peaches to be provided for. The best, again, will be picked out and treated in the same manner, supplied to customers whose taste is a little less fastidious, and whose purses are not quite so long. There yet remain the residue; these will be sold in *as good condition as possible* at the street door; or off a barrow. The return upon them will be rapid, and sold thus cheaply, at a fraction over cost price, they will serve to educate the general public in a taste for peaches, teach them to take an interest in the flavour and quality of the fruit, and habituate them to turn their heads and look at the baskets in the window labelled, 'Choice peaches,' 'Very choice peaches,' 'Try our excellent peaches,' etc.

It must, however, be recognised that such a company must, at its commencement, depend on the support of the public,—'and Capetown,' once said a traveller to the present writer, '*is a one-legged little town.*'

Certainly if this stricture was applied to the rate of progression in things municipal in Capetown, the description is not unapt.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MARKET OF JOHANNESBURG.

A GOOD deal has been said hitherto on the subject of markets, and the part which commerce plays in their exploitation and development.

There is, however, another side of the case, wherein commerce may be as great a sufferer as the producer or the consumer; and an extraordinary instance of such a deadlock is afforded by the present condition of the chief market of South Africa.

When all has been said about political rights, the franchise, and municipal government, we shall find that, after all, the discontent is caused by legislative harassing of trade, which robs men of their earnings and makes their lives quite needlessly uncomfortable.


What shall be said in favour of a policy which is animated by hostility towards the great mining centre of Johannesburg? It is in the first place impossible to believe that Paul Kruger is anxious, as he pretends to be, to promote the true interests of South Africa. For what are these interests? They are the combined interests of two classes, the urban and rural population. The country produces food-stuffs, and requires a market for the disposal of its products. The cities provide the markets. They need the pure milk, the fresh eggs and good meat, the fruit, vegetable, and fresh dairy produce,

without which life is a bitter and unwholesome existence.

It is useless to enter into the vexed questions of German influence and Jameson's raid. The immediate concern is to find a market for the agricultural products of South Africa. Obviously, Johannesburg is undoubtedly the wealthiest centre in Africa, and yet we find it at once the dearest and the worst-provisioned. Situated upon high ground in the healthiest climate in the world, we find that the inspector of health appointed by the Pretoria Government reported that deaths from *typhoid fever alone* amounted to the enormous total of 1,000 per annum. This does not take into account those who go away to die elsewhere of illness contracted in the city. It does not mention the enormous loss incident to sickness, in those who recover and live. We are left to look upon the bare figures, and reflect that a preventible disease subtracts so much from the purchasing power of the central market of Africa.

The report goes on to state that this enormous death-rate is attributed to 'adulterated food and the absence of sanitation'; impure milk has also been alluded to.

Had the Government of Pretoria 'the true interests of South Africa at heart,' surely the scheme for the drainage of Johannesburg would not have been rejected. President Kruger has mastered one side of English life, and believes as firmly as he probably believes in anything else, that provided he appears often enough in public with his Bible, his word will be accepted by the British public. There is, however, another British public which is to be found in South Africa; and they know possibly more of Kruger than they do of the Bible, and are but



little likely to trust his representations or promises upon any subject.

The question which drives through the heart of the case is, how it can possibly happen that in the centre of a pastoral people, and in the midst of a vast territory of virgin soil, adulterated food and impure milk should be a cause of disease.

For the explanation of the problem we must refer to the working of the most curious fiscal system in the world, which isolates Johannesburg from the rest of South Africa. It is a system which is aimed at the destruction of the market, so far as the rest of South Africa is concerned, and the crippling of Johannesburg itself.

If we look at the duties hitherto levied upon goods entering the Transvaal, we shall find that they are carefully calculated to despoil Johannesburg of the necessities and comforts of life. 10s. a head is charged upon cattle entering the Transvaal, 7s. 6d. on every 100 lb. weight of corn or meal, 4s. 10d. a head on pigs. Sheep, forage, vegetables, tea and sugar, are also heavily taxed; while the import duty of all goods imported into this State from over sea, such as Australian butter, tinned milk, cheese and bacon, is $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. *ad valorem*, such *ad valorem* to be 20 per cent. above the home price.

In addition to these direct taxes, provisions are rendered more costly to the consumer by the management of the railways, which are under Government control.

There are three railways connecting Johannesburg with the rest of Africa, and with the five seaports, Capetown, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban, and

Delagoa Bay. Of these lines, the Delagoa Bay line is distinctly and wholly Dutch. The others belong to Cape Colony and Natal respectively up to the borders of the Transvaal. There is a distinct railway policy in South Africa, which is one of the most important factors politically, commercially, and even socially. Not only does the matter of Customs union and federation depend largely upon this railway policy, but the way in which the lines are managed either assists or retards the country through which it passes. The Transvaal system is to place enormous tariffs upon goods passing over the Cape and Natal line, but especially upon the Cape line; while goods coming in through Delagoa Bay are run for nominal freights. At the same time every facility is afforded for quick transit on the Delagoa line, but upon the other lines the goods-sheds are deficient, and delays and obstructions are so frequent as to be a constant source of loss both to forwarding agents and to the recipients at Johannesburg.

Now, two things are of supreme commercial importance in the present day—expedition and cheap transport. The sooner a man can enter upon the uses of the goods he has ordered, the sooner will he derive profit from them, and consequently be able to order more. It is the *quickness* of the return which enables him to put up with the small profit. A market, therefore, which is always behind-hand with supplies must inevitably be a dear one; it will also tend to be a bad one, owing to the staleness of goods. The cost of transport is so grave a feature in commercial matters that it is very badly suited to maintain fiscal duties. Yet such is the basis of the scheme of the Government railways in

Africa; even the stock of the Netherlands Company of the Transvaal is largely held by the Transvaal Government. It is difficult to fix the tariffs for any line upon goods, but, commercially speaking, the rule should be within what the goods will bear. A hundredweight of gold will bear a heavier freight than an equal weight of soap. It may cost the line no more to carry the one than the other, but whereas the soap should travel for a trifling freight, the gold may be charged for heavily. The reason is obvious, that soap is a thing that people will dispense with if it is too costly for their means, but for gold there is a practically unlimited demand. If we examine the working of high freights on railways, we shall find that they act very similarly with passengers' fares. It is to the companies' advantage to carry passengers in as great numbers as possible, and at as cheap a rate as possible. It depends, then, on what the public will pay. We know how anxious railway companies are for exhibitions or new seaside resorts or racecourses to be opened in their neighbourhood, the interest they invariably display in the welfare of the towns upon their lines, and the efforts which they are continually making to accommodate the mining and agricultural interests, and to ascertain to a nicety how much they may venture to charge without checking the amount of their freights and fares.

What can be said, then, for a policy which not merely screws exorbitant rates out of produce, but ostentatiously causes delay and inconvenience to the market?

The incidence of taxation is severe, the assessment being made upon agricultural produce at the border, and not upon the sales; whereby a man is taxed, not

upon the income that he has, but upon that which he hopes he may have. It is said, of course, that Johannesburg is so rich that it can afford to pay high prices. But a dear market means a bad market, and a walk through such a part of the city as that called the Brickfields will convince anyone that there is a population which cannot afford to pay high prices. There may be found respectable English families who have been reduced by the losses inseparable from illness to live in wretched habitations, devoid of the cheapest and commonest comforts to which they have been accustomed in England.

In Cape Colony the outcry is for good markets. The Boers are becoming poorer for lack of markets. In Natal the chief anxiety of the farmers is to find a market for their produce, yet no other colony of our Empire possesses the local markets of South Africa. With three railways connecting Johannesburg with the vast territories surrounding it, the biggest market in South Africa is likewise the dearest, and marked out by medical report for condemnation.

The cause of reform has been dimmed by the misrepresentation of Mr. Kruger, and those satellites and parasites who fatten upon the present evil system. One day, when the battle has been won, the Reform leaders will stand before South Africa in their true light as the champions of liberty and sound commercial principles. Meantime the cause has already claimed its public martyr in Mr. Grey; but the crowded cemetery at Johannesburg bears witness to the many lives which have 'gone down into silence,' and utters a reproach more bitter than words.

But Africa, with all her troubles, is still the land of

good hope, and from all this suffering and affliction good is already dawning, and still the light is growing. There can be no question but that the government of Johannesburg and its reform is the point upon which all far-seeing and right-feeling men can meet, and the removal of the odious abuses under the Kruger-Hollander oligarchy is the true Bond of the common cause throughout South Africa. Even in the Transvaal itself there are Boers who perceive this, and are one with the Afrikanders of Cape Colony and Natal in their desire for the righting of the grievances of the Uitlanders.

CHAPTER XV.

FARMING IN THE TRANSVAAL.

THE Transvaal is a country of great mineral wealth. This implies two things : first, that the price of land and labour must necessarily be higher than elsewhere, and also that, owing to climate and soil, the land will not be as profitable as in other less mineralized territories.

As a cattle country, the Transvaal is not to be compared to Bechuanaland, and it savours of the irony not uncommon in things African that a cattle-farming race like the Boers should have it for their own.

Situated about 4,000 feet above sea-level, the frosts at night are very severe, while the sun is scorching by day, in itself a serious drawback to turning herds loose without shelter. The practice of grass-burning among the Boers has denuded the country of the natural shelter of bush or woods, and very often the grass is gnawed so close to the roots, and so kept down by climatic severity, that sheep stand a better chance than cattle. On the other hand, there are parts of the Transvaal which are unequalled for the cultivation of cereals; and whenever arable farming has been attempted in localities favourable to irrigation, the results have been excellent. Wheat is not a successful crop in Africa generally, and it is open to doubt whether under the most improved methods it may be possible to grow

sufficient for the colony's consumption. In general, all the kinds of wheat tried in the colony suffer from rust, while in Natal it cannot be grown at all.

It is, again, one of the strange ironies of Africa that cereals should answer in the Transvaal precisely where labour is more costly than anywhere else. The outlay on arable farming in labour is always a grave question, and the only way to meet it is by the use of machinery, a line which the Boers themselves will be very slow to adopt ; neither are they likely to improve their relations with the Kaffirs, who furnish the labour market of Africa. The years of Boer rule have been marked by a series of small native wars, undertaken with the principal object of leading captive some harmless tribe, confiscating their cattle, and distributing the 'boys' among the Boer farmers. They appear to be averse to paying regular wages to black labour. The Kaffir is highly sensitive on this point. Once under the influence of civilization, he rapidly develops an acquisitive instinct, and becomes remarkably apt at a bargain. Given a few more years' experience of European methods, and a little more education, and the Kaffir may yet give the Jew points, and a beating into the bargain. The Transvaal Boer does not in the least appreciate the situation. The Kaffir who demands his wages is paid with a shambok, with the result that when an opportunity offers he bolts, carrying the white scars on his back and curses in his heart. By these means, together with the attraction of high pay at the mines in Johannesburg, the Kaffir labour-supply is gradually becoming exhausted in the Transvaal.

Although localities are to be met with where cattle will answer, and though sheep will thrive pretty generally,

it would be altogether untrue to represent the Transvaal as a cattle country. The scarcity of grazing forces the Boers to trek through a large portion of the year in search of pasture. These men are known as 'trek Boers.' The habit is not distasteful to them, but to an English farmer the annual forced wandering in waggons and tents would be intolerable.

Prior to the Jameson incident, a great number of Transvaal Boers were so dissatisfied with their own Government that a general exodus seemed imminent. General Joubert threw himself into the breach, and made them a strong and touching appeal not to desert the country for which they had fought. This tendency to trek is inherent. Some people look upon it as a special design of Providence for providing South Africa with pioneers. Whether these Boers are of as much value as pioneers as is commonly supposed is rather doubtful, seeing that their custom is to provoke the natives and neglect due precautions with regard to disease. However, the tendency being there, it must be reckoned upon; and as it seems ineradicable, the probability is that the Boers will continue to trek, leaving large areas behind them which less ambitious people will be glad to purchase.

One of the best parts of the Transvaal is Marico, although Rustenberg, Zoutpansberg, Pretoria, and Lydenberg are also fertile, and offer favourable opportunities for cereals and fruit-trees. In Marico a few Englishmen are already settled, and by the superiority of their methods and the use of machinery have produced some of the finest crops of cereals in the world, and some Boers have followed their example.

Among these men Mr. Henry Taylor, of Willow

Park, is perhaps the best known. He owns 5,286 acres in a wide valley well watered by the Notwani, which is a permanent river. Five hundred acres have been fenced and placed under water control, and magnificent yields of barley, wheat, and oats prove what the soil is capable of. Mr. Taylor's system of farming is not unlike the old English mixed farming. He has a mill-house, where his engine cleans and grinds the corn, while the offal is used for feeding purposes for stock. He also makes a large profit by chaffing the straw by the same engine, and selling it, compressed in bags, in Johannesburg. A very valuable crop on which a rapid return is made is oat hay, which sometimes fetches very high prices in the towns.

There is a large acreage of bush which remains to be placed under irrigation as soon as it is cleared, and this could be done without diminishing the number of dairy stock, which feed in the mountain upon long sweet grasses. Fruits grow wild, and excellent oranges of the best-grafted kinds flourish and fruit well in Marico.

The two plagues in the Transvaal which render it less desirable than elsewhere for farmers are the hail-storms, which are terribly destructive, and against which there is no remedy, and locusts, which are also at present an unsolved problem.

It is a case of writing off one year in five as a total loss. The best that can be said for them is, that they are one of those vicissitudes in business which can, at any rate, be foreseen.

The profits upon farming in the Transvaal are nevertheless very considerable. In spite of the high price of land, it is no uncommon thing for a farmer to make 12 per cent. on the total outlay. This contrasts well

with much that is done elsewhere, even in mining ; and when the splendid climate and the really magnificent scenery are taken in conjunction with the proximity to railways and civilization, there is a good deal to be said in favour of the life. It is a great outlook for a farmer to stand before a neat farmhouse looking over some hundreds of acres of flourishing crops beyond the well-kept garden, where the verbenas, lilies of the valley, violets, and malmaison roses flourish round the well-fruited orange-trees of his new country.

CHAPTER XVI.

IRRIGATION.

THE year 1895-96 will be remembered in South Africa as a year of drought, though not by any means because drought to the extent then experienced was of uncommon severity. Africa always has been, and probably always will be, afflicted with seasons when the rainfall is generally deficient. But the drought of 1896 was part of a chain of misfortunes, and its effects were more apparent than usual, because during some previous seasons of good rainfall farming had progressed, and supplies had been increasing, though not in sufficient ratio to the demand. Moreover, the population in South Africa was considerably augmented by the rush to the Rand and Rhodesia, and more people made more noise.

The drought of 1895-96 created a stir on the Rand, in Capetown, and the Eastern Provinces, and the way it was received by each of them is worth commenting upon as characteristic of the races in the country.

Easter Day was chosen by Paul Kruger as a time of humiliation, when prayers were to be offered up for protection against the evils—already at the door—of drought, locusts, and cattle disease. It is not, however, recorded that any Dutch pastor improved the occasion by an opportune discourse on the theme of

the assistance those are likely to receive who assist themselves.

A Presbyterian congregation once pointed out to the minister that, in view of the impending drought, it were as well to approach the Almighty on the subject of the rainfall. 'I will not insult the Almighty,' replied the sturdy Scot, 'by asking such a favour of Him, after the way in which you have let His past mercies run away from you.' The rebuke was levelled at the inadequacy of the water-storage, and it is to be hoped was not without due effect.

At the same time pressure was being brought to bear on the Government in Cape Colony, which, in spite of partial Dutch opposition, resulted in the passing of the Bill for water-storage in the Eastern Provinces.

The fresh schemes decided upon in 1895 are for two or three reservoirs, one in the north of the colony, in Kenhardt, to which may be added another at Buchenberg in the same district, and the other at Steynsburg, in the Eastern Provinces, between Aliwal North and Middelburg Road. All three schemes include a certain amount of Government land.

At Kenhardt there were two schemes. At Rooiberg it is proposed to erect a dam about 2,670 feet long, with a maximum depth of $14\frac{1}{2}$ feet, to catch the watershed of the Hartebeest and Zik Rivers. The land here is entirely Government property, and more will have to be purchased to complete the scheme. It is assumed that the land here will be sold at £10 an acre, with an annual water-rate of £2 per acre. These returns, it is estimated, would leave a net annual profit with the Government of a little over 11 per cent.

The second scheme at Kenhardt is that known as

the Buchuberg project. The land here, with the exception of one farm used for stock purposes, is also Government land. The water-supply is to be drawn directly from the Orange River. This river is calculated to rise at least 34 feet in time of flood, and the first plan suggested was the leading out of the flood waters by a canal thirty-six miles long. This scheme has been rejected as too costly, and another plan for irrigating about half the quantity of land is now in contemplation, whereby the water would be raised by pumping, the length of the canal being thus shortened to twelve miles. In the event of purchasers being found for this land at £10 an acre, with a water-rate of £2 per acre per annum, the net return to Government upon the cost of the works would be about 15 per cent. per annum, less the selling price of the land.

The scheme at Steynsburg is the most remarkable, and it is also the largest. There are about 8,000 acres of Government land situated in a great plain, on the west and south of which run two small rivers, the Thebus and Honger Kloof, whose waters might be stored in reservoirs and dams to the amount of about 8,000,000,000 gallons. There are 18,000 irrigable acres in the neighbourhood, which Government is advised to purchase in order to complete the scheme. These irrigable lands would be divided into lots of 10 to 50 acres, half of which may be fully irrigated and sold at £7 10s. per acre, the remainder being kept in reserve and sold at £2 an acre.

The actual return upon this scheme is not given, but the revenue is estimated as about £8,000, and the cost of construction £199,306.

The chief point where these works are likely to fail is

in securing the right class of farmers. The price proposed for irrigable land is suggested by engineers and advisers of the Public Works Department, and is based upon calculations which necessarily have not been taken from the returns on that land. 'The value of irrigable land has been assumed at £7 10s. per acre as against £20 in the South Australian irrigation colonies.' It is difficult to see what the South Australian colonies can have to do with South Africa in this matter. The value of land is what men choose to pay for it, and in this instance a man would be altogether below the average intelligence if he bought irrigable land (carrying an annual water-rate besides) at £7 10s. per acre, if he thought that he could buy land at £1 an acre elsewhere and put water upon it by the exercise of his own ingenuity. That the price of £14 a morgen may be obtained is very probable, but the higher the price paid for land, the less capital remains to be invested. The best way to gauge the value of the Government irrigable land is to ascertain the purchase price of farms in the immediate neighbourhood, and add to it the capital invested upon them in irrigation works or water-storage. But then it must be remembered that in these private works a man can do a little at a time and at his own convenience, as the returns on small improvements begin to come in. Whereas in the payment of a heavy purchase price there will be but one way for most men to meet the case, viz., a mortgage, the interest of which, in addition to the water-rate, will harass and cripple him for years to come. He may also ask why he should contribute 10 or 15 per cent. per annum to the Government. There is also a decided objection to small holdings in a sheep or cattle country, for even a good

farmer wedged between two bad ones on a narrow strip of territory would unquestionably come to grief.

The rainfall in Cape Colony is seldom deficient, but it is always local, and the natural formation of the ground is not suitable for retaining the heavy downpour when it occurs. Therefore there are few decades which pass without a drought. The underground reservoirs provided by Nature, though immense, do not appear to be inexhaustible. They are frequently hard to find, and when discovered, as they often are, beneath a loose and porous top soil, the supplies are naturally useless for irrigation. Here comes in the skill of the engineer, who can first pump up the water and then conduct it through pipes to an elevation above suitable land for irrigation. Another great difficulty with regard to water-storage is the evaporation which takes place under burning suns and drying winds in districts such as Gordonia. Wherever large surfaces of water are exposed, as in pans or reservoirs, the evaporation must inevitably be taken into account.

It is a shibboleth common to the country to say that 'land without water is valueless,' but there is a very large amount of truth in the statement. It does not do to trust to the representations of any land company as to the quantity or quality of water to be found on its farms. It sometimes has happened that farms on which Boers have lived for years, and then abandoned because of their sterility in some years of successive drought, have afterwards turned out valuable property under other management. It may also happen that especially rich grasses, wonderfully nourishing for cattle, will be found growing upon dry land where there are neither spruits nor vleis, and where pans to catch

the rainfall would be impossible. Yet men with a knowledge of the country have bought such land and found it abundantly supplied with water. Neither are the rivers to be trusted. It sometimes happens that a stream believed to be permanent will cease running for several years in succession, though just at the time the man buys his farm he may find the waters in full flood, and learn to his satisfaction that the river has not been dry in the memory of man. All these matters, and the key to the unravelling of the mysteries, cannot be learnt anywhere except on the spot. Once in Africa, a man with his wits about him would perceive what to avoid. He would see how want of irrigation or water-storage means ruin and untold suffering in a single season of drought. He would see the wonderful result of such a water control as that exercised by Mr. William Southey in the Karroo, and he would see the necessity for forgetting English methods and adopting those proved suitable to the country.

There is, however, one difficulty, and that is that matters vary so much in different localities that a man would require considerable means to get a bird's-eye view of all the methods obtaining. It may be as well, therefore, to sketch a few of them, and leave the emigrant to fill in each picture according to his individual experience.

There are two things which will help a man to find water in Africa—one is a slight knowledge of the formation of the rocks, and the other a little acquaintance with plants which indicate that there is water beneath the surface.*

* Although I passed through a part of the Kalahari Desert, I never had a chance of obtaining this knowledge. It belongs really to the Kaffirs, and I could not speak their language.

With regard to the rocks which contain the underground reservoirs, it appears that wherever some ancient volcanic commotion upset the strata, cavities were formed, and into these the rainwater percolates, and there it lies till, by a slow process, it works its way between the shattered strata, and oozes to the surface ten, twenty, or even fifty, miles away, forming a vlei, or marsh; or else it may be that where natives have discovered the proximity of water to the surface they have dug small pits. These pits present a marvel, for they are probably situated in a vast region of dry land, and thousands of cattle drink from them every day, yet the water remains at one steady level, although there is apparently no spring. At other times these secret supplies replenish rivers, and by their means sometimes a river will rise to a flood under a brassy sky in a country where no rain has fallen for months.

It is in the Karroo that these curious proceedings may be watched to perfection. There can be little doubt but that the Karroo has an immense future before it when once the difficult matter of the water-supply has been solved. The soil, wherever water has been placed upon it, is of amazing fertility. It is a deposit from the crumbling hills of boulder and rock of the Duryka conglomerate, which has been washed down into the flats or plains, and overlays a substratum which appears to be a clay slate.

One of the most remarkable private irrigation works is that effected by Mr. William Southey, of Varkens Kop, in the Karroo. Some years ago Mr. Southey found himself a ruined man, his farm in the Eastern Provinces, near Queenstown, having been raided by Kaffirs. He bought his present farm for a nominal

price, in spite of the absence of water, trusting to his own ingenuity to make good the deficiency. The soil was arid, and the Boer who sold it to him was leaving because of the absence of water; yet upon this very land Mr. Southey has reared his noted sheep, which have swept off gold medals and prizes both in Africa and America. He has also a large flock of ostriches; but not the least remarkable feature of the farm is the handsome herd of pure-bred Devons. The idea of a successful dairy-farm in the arid Karroo strikes one at first with a sense of the ludicrous; but the cows are thriving there wonderfully, and the admirable quality of the milk and butter testifies to the excellent condition in which they are kept.

One point worthy of special attention is the fact that, though both the water and the soil contain brak, the deposit does not appear to be injurious to vegetation, but, on the contrary, beneficial. This affords some proof of the supposition already expressed, that a thorough investigation and analysis of brak would be extremely useful, especially if the analysis were presented in a more intelligible manner than that furnished me by the Agricultural Department.

African farmers would do well if, instead of visiting Australia, they went and inspected the irrigation in Egypt or India, for the importance of thoroughly understanding irrigation can never be too much insisted upon. The Afrikander is too prone to ignore the value of experience acquired elsewhere, and so he goes on attacking elementary obstacles with primitive means, and very often getting the worst of the battle. Egypt will probably give the lead to Africa, but America has for some time past studied irrigation scientifically.

Mr. Southey has erected a dam across a stream which is dignified by being called a river. It is subject to floods at certain seasons, whilst at others it is almost if not entirely dry. He has contrived a manner of disposing of the silt by forcing the water through a sluice under pressure of a flood. This sluice is placed at the side of the dam, at right angles to it, and the force of the rush of water turning against the dam drives the silt before it upon a slight gradient uphill.

Once at the top of the rising ground, the water can be turned loose upon the flats. It fills a drinking-pan for cattle about two miles from the river, thus saving the animals a long walk, and afterwards the residue, if any has not been absorbed, finds its way into the river again at a point many miles below the dam.

The object of thus making use of flood waters is two-fold. In the first place, it waters the plains with the rainfall of thunderstorms upon the hills, not a drop of which would otherwise descend upon the plains. The hills attract the storms, probably on account of the ironstone which they contain. It is difficult to be sure what these hills contain. Mr. Southey describes the smell which reaches the plains when rain falls on the hills after a long spell of dry weather as similar to the smell of the rag which has been drawn through the barrel of a gun to clean it. There can be little doubt that the silt contains a great deal of decomposed mineral matter, and the second object served by the disposal of flood waters upon Mr. Southey's system is the utilization of this silt. Upon the land in general it forms a very valuable manure, especially when mixed with the refuse left by cattle upon the plains. But there was a part of Mr. Southey's land which appeared

to be absolutely useless. The bare clay slates of the stratum lay exposed, with no subsoil to cover them, far less any richer top soil. Upon this ground Mr. Southey turned the waste waters of a flood for two or three years, till there was a deposit of about 2 feet of silt. This land produces the finest crops imaginable. It is generally used for cereals or oats, and the yield is phenomenal.

English farmers will recognise much of the foregoing system as very similar to that scheme of culture known in this country as warping, and practised in some counties whose rivers rise annually in flood, and carry a rich deposit upon the land. It has also much in common with the Egyptian use of the flood waters of the Nile. Wherever, therefore, it is possible to secure the water rights of a river which rises even once in the course of the year, and a point is obtainable from which the land may be thus warped, a farmer will have secured a very valuable asset.

But it does not always follow that a river may be thus available. There are plenty of rivers whose banks are precipitous, and in that case a ram may be required to force the water through pipes to a sufficient elevation for it to be stored in a reservoir, and turned loose upon the low-lying land in the dry season. This water will contain no silt. The expense also of damming a flood river must be reckoned. It is frequently a very costly matter indeed, and it is worse than useless to try the false economy of cheap masonry. The result may last in ordinary years, but the first exceptional flood will probably break the poorly-constructed dam and burst the reservoir, with the result that the farmer will have to entirely reconstruct his works, and will probably suffer for one year at least from a scarcity of water.

Not the least curious result of Mr. Southey's irrigation is that he has actually put more water into the river than he has taken out. He computes this roughly from calculating the supplies which he has turned into the river by tapping the underground reservoirs at the back of the dykes in the Karroo formation. These dykes appear to run in straight lines for a mile or two, showing their ragged heads just above the level of the plain. Between them and the hills there is generally to be found a supply of water under a collection of the scattered fragments of rock, boulders, and sand, which volcanic action and the effect of wind and rain and sun, through many centuries, have heaped together.

The secret of finding water in the Karroo is generally only known to those who have lived there a lifetime; but probably it follows a system, and were a geologist to study the matter carefully, he would find that it was a matter of rule. It is, however, a hazardous thing for a man to buy land in the Karroo believing that he will find water. Even if the correct formation is apparently there in every detail, he cannot tell what trick some spirit of the rock may have played deep down below the surface. Still, where there is no river, water may be tapped to a considerable extent, sufficient, at any rate, to water a good-sized flock of sheep.

The power generally used for the pumping process is that of a windmill. These windmills are rather critical contrivances. Either there is no wind and the machine will not work, or else there comes one of the sudden rushes or whirlwinds peculiar to South Africa, and the windmill is broken to bits. There have been devices innumerable to prevent these mills going wrong. A very ingenious one provides that, the sails being attacked

by a certain velocity, the whole mill shall prostrate itself flat upon its face like a Chinaman in the presence of the Great Mogul. But the plain fact is that any man who has to do with these and similar contrivances should understand a certain amount of smith's work, and keep at hand whatever is needed for repairs.

Another kind of irrigation, and one which scarcely applies to private irrigation works, since it requires too large a territory, is the connecting, by pipes or otherwise, of a number of small streams or rivulets. Left to themselves, these feeble supplies would probably be wasted or meander aimlessly into a vlei; but collected together, and with the aid of a rainfall, they may fill a good-sized reservoir, and by their united efforts at the end of three years afford a lasting supply for a large territory for many years. It is by systems such as these that companies and the Government may afford real benefit to South Africa; but it is to be feared that wherever the damming of flood rivers is concerned, there will be difficulties caused by the silt, which will render large works extremely costly, and perhaps, after all, abortive. A better method for the use of public funds would be found by Government grants to individuals, or bonuses upon crops raised by irrigation.

Another point in the case which requires careful consideration is the nature of the soil to be irrigated. It is quite possible to provide ample water, and then find the land too sandy to retain the streams turned loose upon it; or the soil may contain too much clay or lime, and in consequence cake and crack, to the destruction of the crops. It seems impossible to use irrigation for certain crops. Vines especially will not repay irrigation. Then there is the deep alluvial deposit

of old lakes or river-beds, and the rise of water upon this land may answer, or it may not. It is very questionable whether too great a depth of alluvial deposit is any recommendation to land. A solid bottom from 2 to 3½ feet below the surface is preferable, as then there is a certainty of the moisture being retained within reasonable distance of the roots of most crops.

It is, however, extremely common to hear land rated at exorbitant values because the alluvial deposit is 8 or 10 feet deep. It would doubtless answer to cart half this valuable soil, and deposit it as a top dressing on poorer and shallower soils. It would be an advantage in England to be able to plough so deeply; but the regular and reliable rain and damp air of this climate is very different to the intensely-dry atmosphere of South Africa; neither has a 'wetting' by irrigation twice in a year the same effect as the gentle dropping of the rain and dews of heaven, and the slow thawing of the snow. Therefore, when land is rushed up to £25 a morgen (£12 an acre) because it is deep alluvial and irrigable, a farmer would do well to look round and see if cheaper land, equally good *for his purpose*, cannot be found; in fact, the best irrigable land ought not to cost him more than £7 a morgen; and if more is asked, it would be better to go elsewhere, for the capital saved can be better employed.

It very often happens that soil which is too loose and sandy to be irrigated contains water only 2 or 3 feet from the surface. There are parts of the Kalahari where this is the case. The grasses there are very sweet, and plants grow in what looks like hopeless sand, where rain never fell yet, which are veritable water-plants, and keep their deep roots immersed in the underground

supplies. Digging is of very little use, as the sides of the hole fall in; but a deep tube inserted answers admirably, if a pump can be obtained, and some receptacle for holding the water. This land is only suited for cattle, and drinking-troughs and pumps or artesian wells must be arranged.

The Department of Agriculture has done good work by prospecting for water with diamond drills. These drills and all suitable apparatus can be hired by any farmer at an easy rate, and applied to any part of his land where he wishes to have water, or believes that a supply might be found. Once again the necessity for submitting to expert opinion is enforced, as will be seen from the following extract from the report of the Inspector of Water-drills:

‘Regarding the selection of the sites for boring, the reports of the foreman of the drills for the last year show that in 90 per cent. of the failures the sites were selected by the applicants themselves, in many instances in direct opposition to the advice of the foreman. A very crude idea of the conditions relating to the existence of underground supplies of water exists among the farmers in some instances, and in many instances a rooted conviction of huge underground rivers pervades their minds. This theory is bolstered up by the extraordinary statements of certain persons who style themselves “Water Wysers,” and when the drill arrives on a farm belonging to a person who has been deceived by one of these gentlemen, the foreman is requested to bore at a selected site—needless to say without success. All these failures are recorded, together with the successes which usually attend the work if carried on at a site selected by the foreman.

The reports of many applicants themselves fully corroborate this statement.'

The enormous increase in the value of landed property owing to the use of these Government bores may be gathered from the following :

'During the year 1895, 461 applications for the use of the Government water-drill were received, making a total of 961 since the existing regulations were put in force. During the year 326 holes were bored on 189 properties. Water was struck in 247 on 154 properties. . . . There are at present thirteen hand-power and two steam-power diamond-drills, and one jumper-drill.'

It must, however, be remembered that these water-supplies may not be permanent. They are very rarely inexhaustible springs, but rather the catchment of a hill or rock area, where Nature has kindly done the work of storage below the surface.

Every farmer should be provided with a pan to catch whatever rainfall he can possibly receive. There are, however, certain difficulties in this matter: the soil, unless it can be mixed with the greasy lime, almost like plaster of Paris, which abounds in Bechuanaland, or unless some surface of a perfectly flawless nature can be made to contain the water, will be useless for storage; then in some districts there is the loss from evaporation, which is inevitable. Yet this rain-water is preferable to the water secured by the drills; it suits stock far better for drinking purposes, and can be used safely for irrigation, whereas the other sometimes cannot.

A word must be said here as to the effect in the future of the utilization of flood-waters. If we turn to Egypt, where the system is the very life of the

country, we shall find great anxiety displayed to render secure the fountains which feed the Nile. A very potent argument in favour of the late campaign to Dongola for the reconquest of the Soudan is the actual necessity that the Delta of Egypt shall retain undisputed control of riparian rights. What holds good in this large case is equally important, though less apparent, where flood-waters in Africa are concerned; and then added to these territorial questions, is that of the equitable apportionment of flood-waters among individual farmers.

Not unfrequently a colonist may be able to secure a farm with two or three chances for water upon it, if he knows how to look for his opportunities. There may be some rocky hills, or little mountains called kopjes, where scrubby bush and straggly grasses grow. These will very likely afford him a chance of finding water somewhere near their base. Lower down he may find indications of an old vlei slightly scooped in the plain, as though the catchment of the hills had been wont to collect there, but in far too small quantities to form a lake, or even a pond. He will probably find that the bottom is pretty sound; but if he can get some lime (and limestone rock is common in Africa) and throw it down, and turn cattle in to tread it when the rain comes, the bottom will be greatly improved. Then he must set to work to stop the escape of the water, which has probably oozed away and lost itself on one side or other of the hollow. After a year or two of ordinary rainfall, he will be pretty certain to find that he has a fine sheet of water which stays by him all through the dry season.

He may find yet another chance, and if so the farm

must be considered worth securing. He may find the traces of an old river-bed or lake, and such finds are common in Africa. There can be no doubt that the continent at one time contained many vast lakes and noble rivers ; but Nature got rid of their waters by the simple expedient of blowing a hole through the bed of the river or lake and letting them down. These lakes appear to have existed after the coal deposits were formed ; and from the large supplies of coal, it is only reasonable to infer that there were once plenty of wood and trees where there is now very often not even scrub or bush.

In some places the rivers will be entirely dry ; in others they will run for short and fitful seasons. But wherever it is *possible* to arrest them and make use of even little floods, the rich soil on the bank or in the old lake-bed will repay considerable outlay in water accumulation. This is the only legitimate object for borrowing money upon land. Corn and fruit may be devoured by locusts, rust, or blight, cattle may die of disease, but the money laid out in putting water upon first-class land is a safe investment.

In conclusion, something may be said of the crops grown by irrigation. Water will grow peaches and all kinds of fruit-trees, maintaining them through dry seasons. It will generally provide a second crop of corn, or corn following mealies, in the same year. But where its use is of simply inestimable advantage, is in providing green fodder crops through the dry season. The best of these is lucerne (Alfafa). In the Karroo lucerne may be seen in various stages. There will be some good stacks of lucerne hay, which answers for horses and sheep as well as other stock. There will be

a crop held back—merely just visibly green—close at hand another crop, which has been ‘wetted’ three weeks previously, and is a luxuriant growth fit for cutting. Sheep, ostriches, horses, goats, cattle—all of them find in lucerne excellent feed. Then there are millet, and various kinds of sorghum, or Kaffir corn, which can all be grown by irrigation, and upon which sheep can be turned in the dry season, or which can be made into hay, as purposes are served or as circumstances may require. Roots may be grown by irrigation (two crops of mangel per annum), but their value as feeding-stuff is contested—possibly it is not understood.

Another point with regard to the value of placing water upon land is the fact that the result is the forcing of abnormal crops. Where, however, the land is not adequately farmed, the subsequent result must ultimately be to exhaust or deteriorate the land—at any rate upon a considerable part of the territory of Cape Colony. It is not necessary to enter into the effect of water placed upon soil, and the subsequent poisoning by alkalies; the fact remains that from one cause or another we have to deal with a case of diminishing values. No man, therefore, must look merely to his large returns on the first few years of his occupancy. These dividends must be charged with diminishing values, unless he is resigned to find his capital considerably reduced at the end of a certain period.

What are we to learn from this? Certainly nothing against irrigation, and far less any objection to water-storage. So important, in fact so necessary, is irrigation in South Africa that it would be impossible to consider farming without it. But until methods have very largely altered for the better, and until irrigation

is better understood, it is inevitable that a good deal of land will run down in value, and after a few years have to be abandoned. It is, in fact, open to conjecture that many advanced farmers will see the evil day coming while it is yet far off; and, in order to make the most out of their property, will dispose of it, stock and lot, while it is in the heyday of its prosperity. They will sell their acres in the baked Karroo while they still smile with verdure, standing thick with crops, and the fruit-trees uprooted by the weight of their own fruits. The stranger, coming in, will see all this, and the shining dams and water-wheels, all pointing to a perfect and well-developed property, and will be prepared to pay a price according to the value of crops produced. The owner will probably not exact too high a price, and, taking what he can easily obtain, will invest half of it in mines or industrial concerns, and with the remainder start another farm on cheaply purchased land elsewhere. The farmer in many districts of Cape Colony will find the first ten or fifteen years on his holding the best and most satisfactory, so that the old natural rule of wandering peoples is the prescribed code of that inscrutable land, where we send our youngsters to chase their way to fortune through all the plagues of Egypt.

On the subject of water there is a valuable paper in the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society* for June, 1896, which those interested in the subject would do well to read. A single quotation will show its value:

‘The recovery to fertility of extensive regions which need only water for their successful employment as arable lands is a problem of vast importance. The special conditions of water-supply for irrigation are to

be examined by engineers, but the equally pressing question as to the fitness or unfitness of a given soil to receive and utilize the water brought upon it belongs to the department of vegetable physiology.

'A saline accumulation may go on under certain conditions to such an extent as to render vegetable life impossible, and it is therefore of prime necessity to ascertain the relation which possible drainage bears to the withdrawal of an excess of alkaline and earthy salts from the soil. In some cases, at least, such salts appear to be brought up to the surface by capillary progress of irrigation water which had reached some depth . . . and accumulation at the surface becomes highly dangerous to the crops. Obviously this great danger is increased if the irrigation water which was supplied was originally loaded with a large amount of salts. The character of the salts and their distribution in the soil must be examined in special cases, and further action must be based on an intelligent interpretation of results if success in the cultivation of crops on irrigated lands is to be looked for.'

PARTICULARS OF IRRIGATION AT VARKENS KOP, GIVEN ME
BY MR. WILLIAM SOUTHEY.

Description of dams across the Great Brak River, on the farm Varkens Kop, for irrigation purposes :

Dam No. 1. Advantage was taken of a natural dyke crossing the river, forming a natural dam. The bottom of the dam is therefore solid rock, and the overflow descends upon solid rock, and cannot form a dangerous pool. This dam, for the purpose of storing water, has been built where uneven by mason work, and in the centre a gap has been blasted, and an iron sluice fixed—so made as to slide up and down in a cut groove in the rock, that water can either be retained or allowed to flow as required. This water, after being stored, is allowed to flow *when required* into dam No. 2.

Dam No. 2 is built on a rock foundation, also a natural dyke. This construction is a piece of mason work 10 feet high, 6 feet wide at base, and 2 feet 6 inches at top, built of ironstone, cement and lime. The width of this dam is 60 feet, having outlet on both sides of the river, facing north and south. On the north side is an iron sluice fixed in a groove cut into the rock, sliding up and down to regulate the strength of the flow, and is utilized for irrigating land with a permanent stream along a furrow 3,000 yards long on to the lands. On the south side is a furrow 1,500 yards long, and 30 feet wide, for the purpose of flooding a large tract of land (in extent about 4,000 acres) with rain-water after floods.

Waters passing over this dam (No. 2) will be caught up by dam No. 3, a similar mason dam, with an outlet by a similar sluice arrangement, down a furrow 6 feet wide and 2,000 yards long, and is utilized for the watering of extensive lands, and flooding over 2,000 acres of land with flood-waters after rains.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

THERE have been certain occasions on which Great Britain has roused herself to take an active interest in South African matters, and passed some measure theoretically just and satisfactory in the eyes of the British public, with its inherited centuries of political history. The House of Assembly is a case in point.

Each country has its manners and views, which are the products of its past history. The Scottish character still bears the marks of centuries spent in persistent conflict, when the fighting was done for fighting's sake, and with little regard to anything else. A Scot to-day finds it easy to apply the same energy to commerce as his fathers did to clan fights. Naturally, many have become engineers, and may be found enjoying themselves wherever there is anything to be done which is hard, or some initial difficulty which has got to be thrashed. There are plenty of Scots in South Africa. The English, on the other hand, have devoted much more energy to mere thinking. Their Constitution, though it has occasioned fights, was moulded by persuasion and reason.

It is therefore very difficult for Englishmen to understand the views of people who are not to be persuaded by reason. In South Africa they met with

a race of men whose idiosyncratic temperament has been warped by a sense of inherited grievances. There never was a time in their history when a certain large proportion had not got a grievance; and the way they bore their peculiar crosses was not calculated to make them easier people to govern or get on with. In looking back into their history, it must be candidly admitted that, under their own East India Company as well as under the British Government, the Dutch suffered real and unquestionable grievances. Most of these grievances, so far as Great Britain is concerned, arose from mere blunders, due in the first instance to culpable ignorance on the part of the Home authorities. Then, when palliatives were granted, and England tried to humour the Dutch, the choice of the special favour to be bestowed on them was too often like that of the little girl who gave her father a doll on his birthday—because she wanted to play with it herself. England was hurt and surprised when the Dutch did not like the freeing of the slaves; while the fact that the granting of representative government did not produce pæans of loyalty is still a matter of calm surprise, not unmingled with vexation that a pearl of such price should be so little appreciated. To the Englishman, representative government is the breath of life, and having given it to the Boers, how can it be, he wonders, that he and his country are not beloved in return? And how comes it that any measure helpful to British interests should ever be rejected, most especially when those interests are demonstratively the best interests of the whole of South Africa?

The House of Assembly, which was called into existence in 1872, has produced one marked result:

It has summoned a political force into the field called the Afrikaner Bond. The work of the Bond, it is ostentatiously stated, is to protect Dutch interests against the encroachments of Great Britain; in point of fact, it is simply there to offer stubborn opposition to any kind of progressive measure which Government may desire to pass, and to maintain the meaningless prohibitive duties on imports which pass under the name of Protection, which last is done in the supposed interest of the agricultural class. To understand how this unreasonable state of affairs should be the outcome of granting representative government to our colony, let us look at the constitution of the House of Assembly.

It consists of seventy-six members, who are elected for five years, representing country districts and towns. The qualification for the franchise is the occupation of house property of the value of £75, or the receipt of a salary of £50. All members of Parliament are entitled to one guinea a day for their services, and those residing more than fifteen miles from Capetown to an additional 15s. a day for a period not exceeding ninety days. The best guarantee that the members should possess at least elementary education was removed by permitting Dutch to be spoken in debate. The payment for attendance holds out a chance for the maintenance of the dilapidated member of a Boer family, who will be returned by Boer votes as an act of neighbourliness in providing for one whose large family and heavy debts (represented as his 'misfortunes') have reduced him to penury. The payment in cash amounts to more than he would make on his farm in the course of a whole year, and by living cheaply in a boarding-house in Capetown, he is

able to take home a nice little sum at the end of the session. There are also pickings to be made in a variety of ways by a man who is not so foolish as to let slip the opportunities God has given him. Probably he does not understand a word of fluent English, and he never reads an English newspaper. All he knows is that he does not want to pay taxes, or to have to put up with a Scab Act. His notion of Government is that if he is a clever fellow he will get some money out of it somehow ; but if he is a fool, Government will get money out of him.


At intervals he gets up and delivers himself of a harangue in the peevish, whining, nasal twang of Kitchen Dutch. He interlards his speech with quotations from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the light thus thrown upon political matters may be imagined. It is when the motion is put to the vote that his real influence tells. Then the anti-Scab-Act Boer promises the brandy-making Boer his vote for the free sale of spirits to Kaffirs in return for the like assistance against the Scab Act ; and both promise to vote for Protection in favour of the grain and meat growers. Any idea of the general good of the community is impossible to minds which neither understand nor sympathize with any wants outside their own. The notion of the part which 'presents' play, or ought to play, in life is always part of a Boer's calculation ; and sometimes, if bribery is resorted to as a means to an end, or if certain Boers re-enter the House to vote in a condition which represents very practically the brandy industry, it is not a matter for great surprise.

It is a case of extremes meeting, and woe to the man who tries to place himself as a bridge on which they

meet. He must inevitably fall to the ground ; but his cause is a righteous one, and he will rise again.

There is the pushing, energetic Englishman, interested in developing the mining industry. The Boer sees a chance of making him pay a tax, some of which, with a little ingenuity, can pass into the Boer's pocket. Then, by putting Protective duties on imports by sea, he hopes to secure large prices for his own products, and so be saved the exertion of growing so much as he has hitherto done. The raising of prices is never an encouragement to him to grow more ; on the contrary, he grows less, getting as much for the little as he did for the more, and looking on the matter as a blessing specially sent him by the Almighty.

The Englishman who suffers by this arrangement gets angry, and asks him why he does not go ahead. The Boer objects ; Abraham, he says, was surrounded by his flocks and family, and lived in peace, and he will do likewise. He objects to the smoke of a neighbour's fire, and most of all to people coming to settle near him. If they are starving in England, that is no reason why they should come near him to get fat. He does not want people about him ; he likes a country to himself. The English accuse him of being lazy, and say he should work ; but if the soil produces enough without work, why should he work ? Adam and Eve were content with fig-leaves, but the English want to sell him Manchester prints. The English are a vain-glorious people, and he knows what their end will be. They think they know more than the Boer, who is a child of God, and reads his Bible. They say that the earth moves and the sun stands still ; but the Boer knows what is written in the Bible, that the sun knows




‘its up-rising and its down-setting.’ The Boer is content with what God gives him, and drinks sweet wine. It is a true mark of a son of Belial to drink anything else. The Boer is God’s elect, and has no need to learn to read or write, for he can sing David’s Psalms, and he knows enough of the Bible by heart. The English, if they had their way, would do many things which are not according to God’s Word. They would teach his Dopper maidens to dance, and to play the piano; for they are a wicked and a progressive people, and they had better keep their progressiveness to themselves.

This is no overdrawn picture, but the gist and substance of many a speech made in Dutch in the Cape House of Assembly. Such a state of affairs cannot be remedied in a decade, nor yet in five decades. The only positive remedy is education, and the education of the Boers leaves everything to be desired. There is at least two-fifths of the population of Cape Colony growing up with no appreciable education at all. In spite of the efforts which have recently been made, there is no system of education to compare with that of our elementary schools. Compulsion where Boers are concerned is a difficult, if not impossible, scheme; but it is to be regretted that a better example is not set them by many people who ought to take more interest in the matter. It is true that Government makes a grant to assist those Boers who cannot afford to pay for their children’s education. The result too often is that men who ought to pay for their children’s schooling apply for the grant, and even make a little money out of it; and those who are really poor do not care about the matter. The class of University men which in England did so much, and before the era of the Board

schools did everything, namely, the clergy, does not exist in Africa. The clergy of the Dutch Reformed Church have a seminary at Stellenbosch. Some time ago it was found necessary to import ministers from Holland, but they came out with ideas that were altogether too new and startling. Then a few, by way of experiment, were invited from the Scottish Presbytery. These also were found far too modern, so the Boers started a seminary of their own at Stellenbosch, where lads caught on the up-country farms are trained in orthodoxy. It need scarcely be said that the youths turned out by this seminary have about as much in common with our University graduates as the Boers themselves have with the British. Education from this quarter is never likely to be a lively undertaking.

For the last ten or twelve years Mr. Rhodes endeavoured to govern with the aid of the Bond; and it is believed that the Jameson raid put a stop to this ideal arrangement. But though it suits certain people to put the blame of all the vagaries which the Boers may like to display for the next fifty years upon Dr. Jameson, the arrangement of governing by the Bond was a far too ludicrously impossible condition of things to have gone on much longer. The development of the country was making very great strides, and it was wholly unreasonable to suppose that its destinies could for ever be tied to the heels of the Retrogressive Dutch. Moreover, there was a party amongst themselves who saw the case perfectly. These men are the best hope of Africa. The last thing which the best section of the Cape Dutch wish would be to see Boer rule in Cape Colony. Some of them have intermarried with the English. Others have sent their sons to England to



be educated in our schools. One old Dutch name is on the navy list, and several are on the army list. No people are more proud of forming part of the British Empire, and her Majesty has no finer subjects under the sun. Many have gone up-country to Rhodesia, and some are among the Uitlanders' warmest sympathizers in Johannesburg.


It is hard to speak too cordially of these people, who can rise to such a level of fair-mindedness as to appreciate the good side of British character, in spite of our many mistakes and blunders. It argues a force of intelligence which proves what good stuff there is in these men, that directly they come to our colleges they can compete with us, and even beat us, carrying gold medals and other prizes back to the Cape. Any inducement which brings the chances of travel to the Boers is almost certain to produce good results. Those who have been to England generally return with a little of the gift of seeing themselves as others see them. Up to the present they have no literary class. There is no Afrikaner Carlyle to lash public opinion into activity upon educational matters. Far less have they a Thackeray, or a Dickens. But fast steamers and British hospitality offer the best chances for explaining away difficulties and prejudices. As leaders of their own people, whether in the House of Assembly or out of it, such men have a noble work before them; and it is one which everywhere should command British sympathy and admiration. Let us be frank, and admit that they have something to forgive. Few things could be better calculated to demolish an Englishman's pride in his countrymen than a visit to the Cape. He would there find people, who would pass unnoticed at

home, passing themselves off as persons of consequence. Their vulgarity touches the old Cape Dutch on the raw; and no wonder, for a very large proportion of the Dutch are natural gentlefolks, and perfectly well-bred.

Another point which creates a difficulty, in the minds of people at home, is the fact that the Colonial Government is composed of men who have made, and are making, their money in the country. We are so accustomed to be handled by an aristocracy supposed to draw their incomes from the pure sources of the land, that we look askance at the public man who draws his from mines. If there is any sound cause for anxiety on this account in our colonial legislatures, we must regard it as exactly one of those unfortunate limitations which cannot be helped. It is part and lot of the colonial life of Greater Britain; and, after all, the public men there are judged by their services to the country quite as much as they are at home, and the slightest suspicion of jobbery is far more quickly detected there than it would be here.

To people, on the spot, who see the great and noble arriving in the colony for the express purpose of making money, and afterwards hurrying away with their gains, such criticisms as these on the life of the public men appear empty and hypocritical. What would be the record of the elevated and decorated representatives of Her Majesty, if all their private investments were known which the 'opportunities' of their office enabled them to make?

Still, there is plenty of room for considerable improvement in many respects in public and official life in the colonies. So far as the House of Assembly goes, it cannot be said that the style of debate in English



offers no room for improvement. Personalities are indulged in of the grossest description, and the speakers wander sadly from the point. For instance, a member will rise to introduce a Bill, and he is followed by another who opposes it. The line the opposition takes is peculiar, for there may be no criticism of the Bill whatever. The speech will run on some such lines as the following :

‘ Who is this man who wants to legislate for us ? If I mistake not, he is best known by having failed in every business he ever took in hand yet. The last was potting crabs, and he made a mess of that. Now he comes here and wants to legislate for a free and independent colony. No ! Let him go back and pot crabs and make a muddle of that, and leave legislation to others.’

Once, again, the only cure for this style of thing is education.

That the old party of obstruction is waning in influence is due to several causes ; and its further decay is assured, though men like Sir Gordon Sprigg will cling to it as long as it lasts. It offers to the poor brain and the timid heart a chance of office ; for by the subservient and the stupid such a body as the Bond delights to be served. Far too long has it exercised its tyranny over the executive, chaining the hands of men who *knew what ought to be done*, and did not dare to make the attempt.

The move which commands most consideration in Cape politics is the formation of the South African Political Association, under Mr. Innes. It began very slowly, as some thought feebly, about two years ago, and contented itself by giving very elementary lectures on political economy. Since the Jameson raid took

place, and men's minds became unhinged, parties ran hither and thither hunting for leaders, and trying to collect themselves. Many ran into the Innes fold, finding common-sense and deliberation; and some have run out of it again because they clamoured for action and found the Association slow. Still it remains the most respectable opposition which has been seen hitherto in Capetown.

The party which required more exercise, both physical and vocal, started a league with somewhat vague objects, but principally with intent to balance the anti-British tone of the Bond. This league has changed its title once or twice, but it will always be associated with the names of Captain Brabant and Mr. T. Anderson. It may be described as the extreme anti-Bond party; and provided it does nothing reckless, it will probably do some good. There is, of course, the evil to be guarded against of being as ridiculous in one extreme as in another; and it is to be hoped that common-sense and discretion will not be lost in the general excitement and irritation. Besides these parties there are certain of the old political leaders who hold a doubtful position, since their leadership seems to have slipped from them, and left them waving swords in the air. Some have been merely guilty of extreme bad taste and a vain desire to show a smartness in debate for which Nature has not gifted them. Others have failed through trying the old game known as 'running with the hare and hunting with the hounds.' It is difficult to place these men, but their influence is not likely to be great in future. What is most necessary is an amalgamation scheme whereby the best men of all parties can come out and advance the common good of the State. Mr.

Rhodes has done many wonderful things since he amalgamated the diamond-mines, and it remains yet to be seen what his genius will accomplish in Cape politics.

The great point vexing the lives of men in Capetown is the old question of Protection. In times of political excitement men will seize hold of any straw to twirl in the air, and believe they are flourishing the banner of a new creed. The subject of Free Trade is old and familiar, and anyone can get up the doctrines by reading Cobden's speeches, and the recent criticisms upon them in Mr. Williams' admirable work. The behaviour of the Pretoria Government started the idea; the Customs Union, which Natal declined to join on account of the Cape's tariffs, gave the matter another shove, and people have raced away with the idea that Capetown has caught the Uitlanders' grievances; and that an operation is necessary without loss of time. Parliament, it was declared, should assemble, and at once repeal the duties on food-stuffs iniquitously imposed 'by the party which represents mere veldt.' A people's shilling subscription was started to raise funds for a campaign to stump the country in an agitation against the farming interest.

But the facts are not weighty enough to justify the excitement on the grounds put forward. The heaviest item in Cape living is rent. Fruit and vegetables are also dear, but meat is cheaper than it is in England. The tax on wheat has a little history associated with it, which goes to prove that duties on food-stuffs are sometimes influenced by other than farming interests. There was a company in Port Elizabeth called the Port Elizabeth Steam Milling Company, the shares of

which were let down to 10s., when an amalgamation took place with Atwell and Co., and it was found that the shares had been bought in by the directors. The very remarkable step was shortly afterwards taken of *reducing by one half the railway rate on flour from imported grain over the Cape Government lines*; and almost at the very date that this reduction was made the South African Milling Company had arriving enormous shipments of foreign wheat. It is a singular feature in the Protective tariffs which are supposed to be levied by the 'party which represents mere veldt,'* that imported flour should be more heavily taxed than wheat; and that flour from imported grain should travel at a specially cheap rate.

It is clearly very necessary that the agricultural party should make its voice heard. If the duties on meat and on wheat are to be repealed because it is necessary to cheapen living in the towns, let the farmers demand assistance in the shape of reduced railway rates for home-grown produce. Let them introduce a second time the Bill which the Bond rejected last session,

* The following affords an instance of the faith the Boers place in Protection. When it was found that the Basutos could grow corn at a profit and they could not, the idea was actually discussed of shutting out Basuto corn by tariffs. This needs no comment. But taken at its best, the Protective policy is full of trap-doors, by which the commercial class can escape, of which the Boers can form no idea. Dishonest traders have a practice of having two invoices made out, one for their own guidance, and the other for the Customs. Now, as the Customs officers cannot be experts all round in judging the value of goods, all those goods which are taxed *ad valorem* can only be assessed upon the invoice, and a fraudulent invoice offers chances of a handsome percentage. By this means both the Government and honest traders are tricked and robbed.

enabling Government to make grants to assist those farmers who import thoroughbred stock. Let them draw attention to the extortionate rate of interest Government proposes drawing from the irrigation schemes. Above all, let them call for an increased grant to the veterinary department ; and where good roads cannot be made for the transport of produce, let Government advance the money upon the road rates, and lay down a light railway through the district.

It must be remembered that there are two ways of securing profits—by Protective tariffs, and by cheapening the method of production. Beyond a doubt, the better way is the last ; because whatever militates against the success of the towns is harmful to the farmers. No one who realizes the undeveloped state of agriculture can question that primary products might be more profitable and cheaper were there an energetic party in the House of Assembly to advance the cause of agriculture by some other means than those employed by the 'mere veldt' party. No one who knows the cost and dilatoriness of transport in South Africa can doubt that this subject demands immediate attention. Then when these matters have been adjusted, the municipality of Johannesburg (when it comes), and those of other large centres, will doubtless come forward with schemes for encouraging agriculture.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LOCUSTS.

SOUTH AFRICA is the land of variety and of sudden sharp contrasts. This is exemplified, not merely in the sphere of humanity by the black and white races, or by the phlegmatic mediæval Boer and the *fin-de-siècle* civil engineer, but the climate possesses the same peculiarity. If one day is unearthly in loveliness and serenity, the next is certain to be visited with that unparalleled curse—a dust-storm. Then, when it rains it is a deluge, and the land is swept by rivers which yesterday did not exist. When the plague of floods subsides, a wind follows, and the appalling plague of thirst. It is a land where grasses are so rich that cattle grow fat in the open veldt. But the scourge of mysterious diseases afflicts them, and they drag paralyzed limbs and emaciated bodies through acres of rich pasture. The old story of Pharaoh is characteristic of Africa, and there is little wonder if Nature—so strong and so terrible, so capricious and arbitrary—should have produced amongst the Bantu tribes a superstition which is fearful and cruel. They have lived for twenty centuries amongst that which is amazing and terribly uncertain, and have learnt to snatch advantages wherever they can be grasped, and to feel as little gratitude for the gentler

moments in their lives of incessant effort as Jonah did for the gourd that withered.

‘It is always either a feast or a fast’ are the words of a lady who has spent a long life in South Africa, and the saying is eminently true.

The locusts which preceded the rinderpest are a plague which will affect all classes of farmers, but the Kaffirs especially. The drought of 1895 was accompanied by swarms of locusts, and what the drought did not destroy the locusts ate. Once more the old subject of transport pushed itself to the front; for all along the route where the oxen had to take their loads, the grass was destroyed and the veldt bare. The exhausted oxen became a ready prey to any kind of disease, and it is only natural that the rinderpest raged among transport cattle.

There is a history about these wretched insects, and it is as well that it should be learnt. Their progress has been watched; and it is known that they took two years to get from the lakes to the sea, travelling in a south-easterly direction. What brought them south is mere conjecture, but until forty-one years ago there was no record of a locust in Natal. They came down into Portuguese territory, following the Zambesi, and then turned south, each year coming a little lower till they reached Natal. It was not till three years ago that they came in any number. Then they reached Durban in swarms, but a wind took them out to sea and they were drowned. Their dead bodies were washed upon the shore in masses, and smelt so offensively that the people had to turn out and bury them. They have a curious habit of settling in some places, and passing over others. The territory they

passed over in coming south from the Zambesi was a broad belt of coast-land about 200 miles wide. Over this they passed in swarms or detachments, darkening the air and having the appearance of a storm of very large gray snowflakes. They settled from time to time upon the hills, but skipped the valleys. They came again in 1894, and this time there was no north wind to take them out to sea. Nor did they come from one direction only, but from all points inland, though chiefly from the north-west.

The time that they are on the wing is the season when they prepare to lay their eggs. They appear to fly, seeking for suitable spots where to deposit the cocoons containing their eggs. This takes place pretty generally all over Africa about the same time, and locusts may be met with whirling through the air by myriads, across the Karroo and on the high veldt, and nearly always they are coming south. It does not seem to be known what rules guide them in deciding where they will lay their eggs, but the operation invariably takes place at night. As they pass through the country, they alight at intervals and devour the grass or foliage; stripping a certain spot, and then going on again in their flight with renewed vigour. From August to December the locusts are thus on the wing. They will descend upon peach or orange trees and denude them of every leaf and shoot in about twenty minutes from the time of landing. Bananas also suffer, and some species of palms, sugar-cane also in the young stage; but all kinds of cereals are the greatest sufferers from first to last, and, from the close nature of their growth, it is impossible to save them.

As soon as it gets dusk the female locust prepares to

deposit her eggs, probably because most of her enemies are unable then to see what is happening. The necessity for secrecy seems perfectly impressed on her mind, for she buries herself in the earth till only her head is above ground. Each female locust lays a cocoon containing eighty eggs. The Natal Government gives a reward of sixpence a pound for the eggs. One pound contains 550 cocoons, and as the natives took up the matter with great zeal, many tons have been collected and destroyed. If the weather is favourable—that is, not too dry—the eggs will hatch in forty days. Then between hatching and development the larvæ crawl about without wings for six weeks. Although they are much more helpless in this condition than when on the wing, they are far more destructive. The winged locusts alight occasionally and then pass on; but the hoppers, as they are called, commence at one side of a field of corn or maize and work right through it without leaving a blade, and there is no dislodging them.

As far as can be learned, no one has ever followed the life of a locust further than the laying of the first cocoon. Whether the female has finished her career, or how long she may continue her prolific occupation, is quite unknown. It is, however, questionable that she dies very soon after depositing the first cocoon, as in that case the dead bodies of some thousands would be found near where the eggs are deposited; and this does not appear to be the case.

The eggs are in themselves hard to kill. If the weather is unfavourable, they have been known to lie in the ground for sixteen years, and then be hatched out in a propitious season. This indicates that a certain amount of relief will be afforded by the mere population

of territory, especially if the land is energetically farmed, as no farmer would willingly give locusts' eggs the chance of hatching. It also, in part, accounts for the sudden increase in the number of locusts in one year as compared with another.

The enemies of locusts are very numerous. From the time that the cocoon is deposited in the earth, countless other agencies besides human beings are on the look-out for their destruction. The mouth of the cocoon is a small woolly passage like the narrow opening of a bag or sack. This is sealed by the locust with a glutinous substance. It is necessary for this seal to be damped by a certain amount of rain or moisture, so that it may become soft enough for the young larvæ to creep out in due course. But the moisture causes the glue to exude a smell which attracts the blow-fly, who immediately deposits her own eggs, and these grubs prey on the larvæ of the locust as they hatch. When the locusts are on the wing, monkeys are greedy over them, and it is very comic to see them dashing about, catching these delicacies on the wing. Shrikes may be seen taking advantage of a passing swarm to secure as many as possible while the opportunity lasts. These birds pin their prey on the spikes along a barbed-wire fence or on a thorn-bush, and when they have made a good provision they feast upon them; but after they are finished, and the swarm has passed, then comes the fast. Guinea-fowls, and various kinds of partridges which abound in Natal and in parts of Bechuanaland and the Kalahari, feed very greedily upon locusts, and after a swarm has descended these birds become very fat. Different orders of hawks and owls also assist in

the work of destruction, and so it is said do hyenas, mier-cats, and, in fact, most of the cat tribe, who find locusts a delicious article of food. Kaffirs gather them in sacks, and feast upon them, besides roasting them in large quantities for their cattle.


But, in spite of all these active enemies, such are the numbers of the locusts that they appear to be increasing rather than diminishing. Though immense efforts have been made to destroy them in Natal, the best endeavours pass for nothing directly a wind sets in from the Boer republics. Upon Dutch territory no steps are taken to destroy them, as they are looked upon with superstitious reverence as a visitation from the Lord. Both Zulus and coolies are fully alive to the necessity of combating the evil, but the same cannot be said for the Kaffir population in general, which has not been educated on the subject in the smallest degree. When the enormous tracts of land are remembered in Rhodesia and beyond the Zambesi, besides the wide stretches in the Kalahari, where locusts may breed unmolested, it seems hard to imagine that much can be done to effect their diminution. It is true that of late a disease has been discovered amongst them which appears in the form of an epidemic, and is believed to be a fungus of some kind. Thousands died in Natal of this complaint last year, and strenuous efforts were made to propagate it; but it is to be feared that, though deadly at first, it is of a transitory nature, and wears itself out much as influenza does with human beings.

Besides gathering the eggs, an attempt was made in Natal to drive the locusts into trenches while in the hopper state, and bury them alive. This mode of destruction can only be carried out where the nature

of the land and the crop upon it permits of such measures. It would be manifestly impossible in a tea-plantation, or a vineyard, or in soil on which boulders or large stones abound.

Another method which has been tried with some success is that known in America as the 'hopper-doser.' It consists of low narrow trays containing about half an inch of petroleum. These trays are dragged slowly across the veldt, where the hoppers are beginning to crawl; the back of the hopper is about a foot high, and as it passes over a perfectly smooth surface the hoppers are raked into the oil. Even if some hop out again, they are certain to die, and also perform the useful work of distributing some of the deadly oil on others which may have scrambled to one side. The least suspicion of petroleum is sufficient to kill a hopper, seeming to penetrate the body and poison the system beyond all hope of recovery. These hopper-dosers are an excellent mode of destroying the larvæ, provided they hatch anywhere in the open or before a crop comes up, and the oil appears in no way injurious to grass or plants; but a sufficiently level surface is unfortunately rare in Africa, while in a vineyard or an orangery it would be obviously impractical.

Another mode is by laying poison. This is always resorted to most reluctantly. There is always something repulsive to the mind of decent humanity in laying poison; and calamities result from it too often to make it a desirable proceeding. However, in cases such as vineyards and gardens it is extremely difficult to suggest any other means of getting rid of the hoppers. The plan is to mix arsenic with bran, and place little heaps of it at intervals among the vines, or wherever



the hoppers are known to be crawling. They will eat but a small portion, and die in thousands. It is the least troublesome and most effectual means; but alas for the pet dog or cat which happens to eat a bird, mouse, or other animal which has also partaken of the mixture.

Another means is to spray the locusts when they arrive on the wing, as they settle to feast on peach-trees, oranges, or other crops, with a chemical preparation or a simple solution of petroleum. The chemical solutions are expensive; and it takes a great deal to make an impression on a swarm which may be twelve miles long and half a mile broad. The labour of performing the operation alone is a considerable item. On the other hand, it is precisely a subject which ought to be a point of honour with all men, to do their level best for the destruction of every locust within their reach, whether on the wing or not. Government might do something by supplying the loan of spraying machines and canisters of solution to those who declare themselves too poor to make the purchase themselves.

It may be as well to allude, in passing, to the recently reported discovery of oil-mines in Cape Colony. If there is any truth in the reports, nothing could be more fortunate. Up to the present time all the oil used in South Africa is imported from America, and until the new Customs regulations come into force there is a tax upon it. With the discovery of bituminous rocks and oil-wells, the great and sore difficulty of transport will be mitigated, and one further destructive agency let loose against locusts.

Until the plague of locusts is no longer a possibility which may or may not descend upon any man's farm,

great care should be exercised to crop a certain portion of the land with some plant which the locust will not touch. Wherever there are stock, such as sheep, ostriches, or cattle, an attempt should be made to set a good stretch of the irrigable land with alfafa. This crop appears to be invariably refused by locusts. It also affords a level, easy surface on which the hopper-doser can be used if desired.

Sweet-potatoes are also rejected by locusts, and the ordinary potato appears to have escaped hitherto. Needless to say that for stock, especially fat stock and pigs, potatoes of either kind are a valuable food-stuff. Tomatoes and celery have not been reported as favoured by locusts up to the present time, and for market gardeners these crops can be reckoned as certainties. Tea and coffee also escape, and sugar-cane, except in the young and tender stage. A good deal depends on the stage of growth which the plant has reached by the time the locust arrives, and ruin can frequently be averted by means of irrigation. The locust itself does not seem averse to a wetting. At any rate, moisture is requisite for the successful hatch-out of the eggs, and on the wing they can escape from irrigation. But the farmer will certainly gain a little who can rush in with a second crop after the swarm has passed, and by means of irrigation get at least something off his land.

On the whole, the case is one for administration. The Kaffirs throughout South Africa require instruction, and keeping up to the mark on the subject. Let us take Bechuanaland as a fair sample of the way they have been taught to meet the difficulty. Not a locust was heard of in Mafeking, on the north-eastern border of British Bechuanaland, until 1891. Then they

began coming in very small swarms indeed, and the natives looked upon them as a godsend in the way of food. Other people treated them as curiosities. No one thought of destroying them. Now they are there in myriads, and have spread destruction right across Bechuanaland, and yet no steps have been taken to destroy them. The natives, of whom there are many thousands, depend upon mealies and the milk of their herds. The pasture and the mealies were both alike swept away by the locusts, and the natives themselves are now dying of diseases engendered by improper and unwholesome food. To meet these difficulties, distributions of seed have been made, and the people are given mealies gratis to plant their plots with.

If we look at Bechuanaland—both the Protectorate and the old Crown Colony—we shall find that almost without exception the fine soil in well-watered districts belongs to the Kaffirs. But who has taught them to make use of these opportunities for irrigation? The missionaries, who are at all times so eager to collect funds for the support of the starving blacks, might at least have invested these sums in such a way as to have promoted the education of the people and helped them to see the necessity of working instead of lounging about their locations all day and leaving the work of mealie-planting to their wives. It would also have been a wise measure to try and discover whether some plants, such as those above alluded to, would grow there, instead of courting a repetition of the disaster by having no other crop except mealies or corn, which, of all others, are the crops most affected by locusts.

It is a case for minimizing loss, and something should be demanded in return for the free gift of seed so as to

eventually turn at least one corner of the loss into profit. Improved roads, the digging out and kilning of lime, the planting of trees, the erecting of water-storage, are all points on which Kaffirs in Bechuanaland might have been as profitably employed as the natives in India in similar times of distress.*

* Most of the above information was given me by Mr. Marshall Campbell, of Natal. The subject of locusts has been scientifically studied, and the habits of the insects carefully watched in Natal; and the best information on the subject comes from that quarter. In the *Cape Argus* for December 1, 1896, there is the following telegram from Maritzburg: 'Mr. Arnold Cooper, recently engaged by the Government to make investigations into the locust disease, reports to the Commissioner for Agriculture: "I have been able after some experiments to artificially dry the fungus and pulverize it without in the least impairing its vitality. This will facilitate its spread artificially, and render the dissemination more easy. I have sent tubes of the cultivated fungus to the magistrates at Ndwegwe and Krantzkop, with directions as to its application, and also to several private individuals who were anxious to assist in the experiments. Mr. Capen Montgomery reports to me that he injected 163 locusts between the hours of 9 and 11 p.m. with the contents of one tube. He sent me three of the infected locusts, which died on the fourth day, showing a good growth of the fungus internally. About 60 to 70 per cent. of the locusts experimented upon have died from the disease; the remainder have died from various causes. In some parts of the district locusts are reported to be dying in quantity, and specimens show that they have died from the fungus disease; others have died from other causes, which I have now under investigation. Some specimens exhibit a profuse growth of bacteria, and symptoms of general intestinal inflammation; this may possibly be utilized."'

Too great praise can scarcely be bestowed on the energy and intelligence shown in these investigations.

CHAPTER XIX.

OSTRICHES, SHEEP AND ANGORA GOATS.

THERE was at one time an idea prevalent in this country that ostrich-farming at the Cape was a sure road to fortune, and many young men rushed out and invested in the business, to their subsequent ruin.

Ostrich-feathers are dependent for their value upon the taste and fashion of people living miles from the home of the ostrich. This alone renders the business precarious, and it should never be entered into by itself alone. The birds will only thrive in certain localities. The same thorn veldt as that suited to goats answers well for ostriches. They require immense attention, as there are diseases to which they are very prone, and which generally seem to carry off the best birds. A change of diet is particularly necessary for birds kept in confinement, and lucerne is a very favourite food, either growing or cut up.

There is an immense amount to be learnt in the farming of ostriches, and the only way to obtain the necessary experience is by working and living upon a successful farm, such as may be found in the eastern provinces of Cape Colony. The greatest caution is required in embarking in the undertaking, and almost any other branch of farming offers safer and better prospects.

Sheep farming is shifting its ground very much. It is not improbable that on some of the land which is so impoverished by cereals and bad farming, sheep will be increased, and elsewhere they will be abandoned owing to disease. It is not unlikely that moderate-sized mixed farms will presently be started at Stellenbosch and elsewhere in the colony, and sheep will find their place upon them in moderate numbers, so that the actual number of sheep in the colony may increase rather than diminish. The value of sheep upon land is hardly yet recognised. At home we are glad of them for the reason that they return phosphates and other valuable manure to the soil, and help to clean the land; but the necessity of manures has not yet come home to the generality of Cape farmers, far less that of combating noxious weeds. The Cape wool has suffered in the market, and only last year some of the best farmers refused to sell their bales, so low was the price offered. The scab is partly to blame for this, and also the mischievous custom of shearing sheep on sandy floors. It had even become a practice to throw sand upon the fleeces, to add to their weight. The result was that Cape wool acquired as bad a name in the home market as Cape wine, and the dealers put down the price by common consent in order to secure themselves against loss.

Another difficulty with regard to wool was that the manufacturers were asking for a hard wiry wool like the alpaca, and the Cape wool is of the soft merino kind. In America some farmers provide against the fluctuating change of the taste in the market by keeping two flocks, and thus always having a certain amount of marketable wool.

It is said, however, that the African climate is not favourable to the hard wools. If this is the case, a farmer ought not to farm with nothing but sheep.

The Angora goat answers very well at the Cape, the hair being superior to all but the very highest class of Turkish.

The great difficulty with mohair is to keep the clip clean. Dirt takes the price off the best of the Cape hair when it reaches the manufacturer. It is said that the chief cost of the goat in its native country is the keeping of it sufficiently clean. It would be a great boon if some mixture could be found to put on the hair and prevent the stain taking effect. But the great necessity is for cleanliness in the kraals, or at least a dry resting-place at night other than the wet and dirty kraals.

The Angora goat answers well in the thorn veldt, and goats, sheep, and ostriches may be found flourishing on the same farm.

The diseases to which sheep are liable in the Cape are many, and will be dealt with presently. The subject of feeding sheep is also referred to under the heading of wheat. Both with sheep and goats, the practice of keeping immense flocks, and depending entirely upon them, is to be deprecated in South Africa. It would seem as though South African farming would never rise to the large cattle and sheep runs of America and New Zealand, but remain midway between the small mixed farming of the English home counties and something a good deal larger. There is no doubt much to be learnt on both sides. The greatest point of difficulty at present is disease, which must inevitably be stamped out before the industry can prosper.

CATTLE DISEASE.

The list of cattle diseases prevalent in South Africa is truly formidable, but upon examination it will be found that most of them are due to carelessness or ignorance, and that very few are not already yielding to treatment.

Probably the worst is lung sickness, which appears to be the same as pleuro-pneumonia. This complaint is so well known in this country that it would be superfluous to discuss it further. Red-water and quarter-evil are also very common among calves; anthrax, glanders and farcy in horses; wire-worm in sheep, goats and ostriches. There are also outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, and Texas fever is said to be increasing.

There is nothing very surprising in these complaints being found in South Africa, since they exist more or less all over the world; but there are other diseases which appear to be peculiar to South Africa, and hitherto no cause has been assigned and no effective treatment discovered. There is said to be a discovery for the cure of horse-sickness, but up to the present time the matter remains much where it was. The complaint is now commonly ascribed to malaria, and so far this seems substantiated by the immunity which those horses enjoy which are kept on high ground and shut in at sunset and sunrise. It is confidently asserted by some people that horses are free from the sickness wherever coal fires are kept burning, coal smoke purifying the air of the poisonous effluvium.

Another mysterious complaint is stiftziehte, which appears to be the same as the makokomalo of Bechuanaland, or lumziehte, or paralysis, in the colony.

The immediate cause of this disease is still unknown. Some ascribe it to want of phosphates, others to the eating of a poisonous plant with a yellow flower, which is found on certain veldts. Its effects appear principally in the nervous system, and wherever veterinary science has attempted to treat cases, the remedies used have been first calomel, or Epsom salts, and subsequently nerve tonics.

Some mystery appears to attach to the disease called red-water. On some farms it seems almost identical with the disease known by that name at home, but in many districts of Cape Colony and the Transvaal it assumes a severer form, and is believed to be the same as Texas fever in America. The ravages from this complaint are great, and it is accompanied or followed, or, as some say, engendered, by ticks. That it is contagious through poisoning the veldt seems certain; but the curious part of it is that the people who are most positive about its contagious nature take no care to quarantine the cattle who first exhibit its symptoms.

Besides scab, fluke, and liver complaints, which cause a large annual loss in sheep-farming, there is another complaint which is very deadly among sheep, called Gheel Dikop. It commences with large swellings about the head, and the animal generally dies at last of suffocation.

These are the principal causes of the great losses in live-stock which take place in Cape Colony. Mainly owing to the exertions and representations of the farmers in the Eastern Provinces, the Government has added to the Department of Agriculture a veterinary staff, whose business it is to attend cases of disease and report on the subject. It is hoped that by degrees they will

spread sufficient information for farmers to be able to doctor their own cattle more efficaciously ; and up to the present time there are indications that this may result.

It is, however, greatly to be regretted that a work of such enormous importance should not receive greater assistance. The surgeons are employed posting about wherever they may be sent for, and frequently after a long journey they see an animal just at its last gasp, and are able neither to learn what was the cause of its illness nor to cure it. Although some farmers are eager to get the advice and assistance thus offered them gratis, others, again, are so far indifferent that they will not lend the 'vet' so much as the use of their own cart *unless Government pays them for it.*

What is really wanted is to have a certain number of surgeons stationed in those districts where disease is prevalent, and to provide them with the means for experimenting upon cattle, in order that by watching the result some conclusion can be arrived at as to the cause and treatment of unknown diseases.

This is just what is happening at last with regard to the rinderpest. It is manifestly a matter which concerns not merely the farming interest, but the health of the public as well, and is therefore a fair subject to be charged upon taxes, whether raised by Customs or income-tax.

Those farms which are most free from disease have invariably two features, the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. One is fencing, and the other irrigation. Many of the diseases are distributed by contagion ; quite half of them only begin to make their appearance when the veldt is eaten down very close and food is scarce. If at such times a farmer can raise a crop by

irrigation, the condition of his cattle is improved, they are strengthened and less likely to eat poisonous plants out of hunger.

It is not uncommon to hear people advocate grass-burning as a means of disinfecting the land. And it is possible that, where the saliva of diseased cattle has dropped upon long grass, it is prudent to burn that grass, and the same applies to the destruction of bot-flies and ticks. It is strange that lime, which is one of the commonest of the subsoils in Africa, should be so little used for disinfecting kraals. It even seems that on some land, such as Malmesbury, where the grazing of sheep answers remarkably well, crops of lucerne, with a heavy dressing of lime, might be tried on the exhausted corn-lands. The very soil is, perhaps, poisoned with rust (the common blight on wheat in that district), and though no doubt a good deal might be done by obtaining the exact kind of wheat to suit the particular soil, it would be certainly beneficial to give the land a rest from cereals and turn sheep upon it. A difficulty might arise that, so soon as a farmer had got together a satisfactory flock, disease in some form would break out amongst them; he would lose his sheep, and the land would become unwholesome. It has always been the case that, when sheep have been pastured for any time upon one part of the veldt, they begin at length to die from disease. But if a part of the land were ploughed every year, and sown with good grasses or clover or lucerne, and a top dressing of lime put upon it, the sheep could be folded on it to feed down the poor crop and tread in the lime, and the land would be fresh and pure to them once more.

The great need everywhere is for more top soil upon

the veldt. For the most part there are the rocks of the underlying strata and the subsoil, but very little indeed of the top-soil we are accustomed to find in England. This is partly due to the fact that there is little or no decomposing vegetable matter. It appears that the great heat consumes decaying matter, and it shrivels to nothing. It is also said that alkalies in the soil brought up by irrigation destroy vegetable matter. Anything which brings a mixture of soils to the surface would be beneficial. There are plenty of soils in Africa only waiting to be used in this manner—lime, gypsum, clay-slate, decomposed granite, etc. There are also the minerals, and so soon as the ironstone begins to be worked, a plentiful supply of invaluable top-dressing will be provided by the basic slag, which is the best substitute for phosphates.

These matters may not prove as effectual in cleansing the veldt as may be wished; but at all events, with the aid of irrigation, they would provide good crops during the dry season, and these, mixed with lucerne-hay and chaff, would keep the cattle in flourishing condition.

The late exceptional progress made by the rinderpest affords an excellent instance of the inefficient manner in which contagious diseases are dealt with. There has been a total absence of concerted action. Some rules were made in the Orange Free State, admirable in themselves, but the Administration (as in the case of the Scab Act) was too slack, and the rules were evaded or broken with impunity. As for the Kaffirs, their superstition leads them to trust in witch-doctoring, while the Boers trust in home-made remedies, which are not a bit more efficacious. Only recently the President of the Transvaal Republic announced the dis-

covery of a certain cure for rinderpest. It consisted of tobacco-water and petroleum-oil administered by the pailful alternately. Soapy water is held to be the only remedy worth administering for Texas fever or anthrax.

Through the influence of the land, there is the chance of bestowing a splendid elementary education upon these people who 'sit in darkness.' What the Romans first did for us, and what we afterwards did for ourselves—*the land* bears the history of it all. On the land are based our laws, our character, and our government. Out of the land has grown the power which has made our country great among nations. It must always be so everywhere. It is not the gold, and not the diamonds, which make character. It is the development of an industry which walks hand-in-hand with God and Science. Manufactures have not made England. The army, the navy, trades, and professions, are best furnished by the estates and villages of England. These agencies have built up Imperial India, and they still produce the right class of men to help in rendering our Colonies free, enlightened, and prosperous.

CHAPTER XX.

WHEAT.

It is customary with some writers to state the area devoted to a certain crop as an indication that that crop will pay to cultivate. In the present work all such statements are avoided. It is equally useless to give prices, as they indicate nothing without the cost of transport—a very variable item in South Africa, owing to roads—prices of cattle, or horses, labour, etc. The best that can be done is to give some idea of the prosperity of the farmers, and, where they are not so prosperous as they might be, to indicate the cause of the depression.

Wheat will grow in the Transvaal, and an account of a successful farm there has been already given.

Malmesbury, in the Western Provinces, has been long looked upon as the 'granary of the colony.' But what are the facts at present? There are said to be '7,000 farmers in this corn-growing district, and *not one of them can make it pay.*' Yet there is a railway through the district, and the price of wheat is forced up by a heavy duty on imported grain at the Cape ports.

If we look back a few years, we shall find that the crops in this district were once first-class, probably quite equal to those on the best wheatlands of our Eastern counties. But the farmers were content to

continue cropping the land with cereals. Then, when manure was required, they bought guano cheaply at the Government stores, and continued forcing the land with it till it could be forced no further. The grain suffers terribly from rust whenever the winter rains run into the summer, so that, what with blight and poor crops, wheat-growing no longer pays for seed, let alone cultivation. The rust seems worse whenever the farm-work is late and the sowing too long delayed. The earlier the seed is got in, the more likely the crop is to escape rust.

It is necessary to speak plainly respecting exhausted land, for there have already been, and probably will be again, some attempts to force worthless territory on the British public.

The way this is done is very simple. To begin with, most of these farmers have mortgaged their land to its full value, as it was assessed at the time *when the wheat was a paying crop*. The interest on these mortgages has acted like a heavy rent, but it has been met until recently. Now the position is this, that the people who took up these mortgages, and who reside in Cape Colony, begin to be anxious about their capital. Probably the lawyers have relations with both sides, and they see that it is very hard luck for both the farmers and the bondholders. They consider that the best remedy is to form a company which shall buy out the farmers at a price as near as possible to the value of the mortgage, thus forcing the land up to its original value; and by a little arrangement with the holders of the bonds, in consideration for the handsome interest they have already received, the farmers will be excused on their bonds, and allowed to trek away to purchase cheap

land elsewhere. Thus, neither party will be ruined. The question is, Where shall the money come from? It must be got by a company, and the company must squeeze it out of the British public, for no one at the Cape would buy the land at the figure required. The prospectus is drawn up, including some influential names, both Dutch and English—if possible, some connected with the Government or the Agent-Generalship. Glowing reports of the fertility of the land are set forth, and figures are given to prove that the estimated net revenues on the farms would be sufficient to pay upwards of 9 per cent. on the purchase price.

Perhaps the British public does not rise to the temptation. Meanwhile the farmers have gone to sleep, and the land has run from bad to worse, and they begin to grumble because they are still encumbered with their property. Therefore the prospectus is recalled and another issued, stating that gold and diamondiferous soil have been found on the properties, and that the estate only awaits development to prove richly remunerative.

It is in this way that not a few bogus companies have perpetrated the shabbiest tricks, and dragged the Cape's good name in the dirt. Only recently a prospectus of the kind was issued concerning some farms in the neighbourhood of Capetown and Stellenbosch, and there was one on which the improvements alone were put down at upwards of £11,000, and the yearly income at over £2,000. Shortly afterwards this farm, which had been offered in vain to the British public, was sold (at the Cape, where the truth was well known) with great difficulty at a public auction, for £2,000.

One such case is as good as a thousand, but before

leaving the topic, notice must be taken of a certain farm up-country which was offered in London with a great flourish. The fertility of the soil was no less dwelt upon than the *rainfall, which was stated to be "regular and abundant."* For some reason this farm did not sell, and after the prospectus had died out, and the matter had cooled a little, a fresh attempt was made. The name of the farm was changed, and it was offered as a Nitrate property, the prospectus strictly setting forth that '*no rain had fallen on this farm in the memory of man.*'

Perhaps it is not quite so necessary to record these matters now, as it was a few years ago; but looking to the ruined condition of Malmesbury, and considering the further ruin which must inevitably follow in the wake of the rinderpest, it is impossible not to fear lest some similar modes of assisting needy friends and poor relations will be started again very shortly. Besides, in Great Britain there will always be found the widow, the country parson, and the retired army officer.

Our present object is to find the cause of the ruin on the Malmesbury wheat-land, and to do so we must look at the agricultural methods in use. The land is very light, and certainly contains no vegetable matter to speak of. It is ploughed, according to the assertion of some farmers, to the depth of 9 inches, though this seems hardly probable. The crop is sown without the land being cleaned, and a struggle ensues between wheat and the natural growth of the veldt. This last flourishes tremendously in the strong guano which is applied after ploughing. The land is not touched till the crop is reaped. There is no hoeing or hand-pulling of weeds; both grow together until the harvest. The

straw is sold, and the land cropped again with oats. It is cropped thus for three years, and then sheep are turned in for three years; but the method differs upon some farms, and sometimes sheep are turned in every two years, or even every other year. The sheep simply browse on the veldt, and they look as lean as the wheat crops alongside them. Yet it is held to be a very fine country for sheep, and there is very little disease. Certainly, considering how much sheep are wanted to return phosphates to the soil, and that phosphates are said to be entirely wanting in the soil at Malmesbury, more sheep might be kept, and by sowing forage crops and making hay of some kind they might be maintained in better condition. Mules answer well in this district, but very little business is done in breeding them. The land is almost entirely unfenced, but the water-supply is good, and there are very fair roads running through it communicating with the railway.

The case of Malmesbury offers some suggestions as to the failure in African farming. To stand on the top of one of the round knolls and overlook the district is to gaze on a treeless country without stacks, or wind-mills, or water-mills. There are a few farm-houses in sight, but so far apart as to make it clear that the holdings are large. Except for a few sheep turned loose on the land, which has been allowed to run out of cultivation for its own good, and perhaps a mule or two near the farm-house, there is no stock in sight. The farm-houses have untidily-kept gardens, in which the fruit-trees grow without pruning, driven on one side by howling winds, and the farm buildings are of the poorest; in fact, they hardly exist. The wretched-looking wheat crops go on mile after mile without a

fence, except where an enterprising farmer has set a line of barbed wire along his boundary, and even that is rare.

To offer suggestions from an Englishman's point of view is to be cut short at once with the delightful information that Englishmen know nothing of farming, and that only Boers know how to farm.

But what are the facts, looked at steadily? That stock helps land, and land being highly farmed helps stock. Let us take one feature only: the difficulty in Africa with dairy cattle is the very small yield of milk. In all probability, Australian cows might improve this point, but even the best milch kine require suitable food-stuffs. Through the greater part of the year the cows are turned loose on veldt which is as dry as hay. What the albuminoids in veldt pasture may be is at present unknown, but it is not likely to equal the albuminous food given to our dairy cattle at home. Granted that the cakes which we use would not answer in the dry hot climate of Africa, there are other means of administering albumen, especially on a farm which produces cereals. It would seem especially easy to make use of a variety of feeding-stuffs in a country where green crops can be commanded at will by irrigation at any season of the year. Then—in land which will bear cereals—by the use of a mill the bran can be turned to account on the spot, and the transport be reserved for the flour alone. It is held by some that irrigation will not answer on such light soil. But if the subsoil is clay-slate, as is stated to be the case, this difficulty would be easily overcome.

What does not seem clear to the Western Province farmer is the effect of the pith or indigestible matter on

the veldt to his cattle. Cattle are generally turned out to eat *as much as they will of whatever they can find*. At home we are accustomed to give animals a chance in rotation—the horse first, then the sheep, who will live and thrive on what the horse cannot digest; and a good farmer will part with his stock when he knows they are at their best with what he has to give them. To turn a hungry horse out upon pasture where *nothing is left* but sticks or coarse wiry fibre, is to tempt the creature to its own destruction. Anyone whose habit it is to watch animals grazing knows how perfectly each creature picks and selects the bits according to its taste, and how intensely they relish a change of pasture, even if it be only out of one grass-field into another.

With regard to pith in general, it would seem that a certain amount of hard fibre does no actual harm to many animals. We see cows eating twigs off trees, or shoots from hedges, sometimes in preference to rich pasture. Sheep will do this still more, and add a taste for acorns, not even rejecting the husks. English deer will sometimes be seen picking up dead sticks and munching them, and goats will eat the hard fibrous stalks of thistles. Fallow-deer are particularly fond of the bark of trees. The present writer has seen fat buck in an English park, which in the winter season were supplied with turnips and hay and were in perfect condition, hunting for acorns, and eating the dead twigs under the oaks, occasionally sucking up and chewing a dry oak-leaf with relish. But who in their senses would leave valuable cattle or horses to pasture in this fashion? We know what the result would be.

It is customary to praise the Boer for his love of cattle. It is difficult to find out in what this love

manifests itself. There is not amongst them the quick eye, the skilful hand, the intuitive knowledge which has been bred amongst our stock-keepers, which it is beyond the power of education to bestow, and whose results are seen in our British cattle breeds. They like to possess large herds as a sign of their wealth, as millionaires love their bank-books, and that is the sum and substance of their love of cattle.

If this exhausted land could be bought at 10s. a morgen (5s. an acre) in moderate holdings, well fenced, and mixed farming started, including dairy cattle, sheep, pigs, and mules, there seems no possible reason why it should not pay. Belts of trees ought to be planted for shelter and shade, and a certain amount of machinery would be advantageous, as labour is a difficulty, though Englishmen might not find this the case.

That rust should consume the wheat in Malmesbury is really a new feature, as years ago there were no complaints of blight. It seems as though the seed had become poisoned with the blight, and the farmers were too careless and indifferent to see that they sowed clean seed. The probability is that wheat will not grow as well in South Africa as in some other countries, and that more use will have to be made of mealie flour for bread. Oats answer well nearly everywhere, and it is a pity that greater use is not made of oat-cakes, and especially that oatmeal porridge is not commoner than the disgusting mealie pap which is everywhere provided so liberally.

In passing, it may be well to mention that materials for making hurdles do not seem to exist in Africa. Yet some cheap fence, easily moved, would be very handy for folding sheep. Strips of galvanized iron, which a

farmer could screw together himself, as he wants them, might answer. The iron factories at home might look into these matters. In the way of ploughs, the Massy-Harris cultivator, an American six-mule combination plough, pulverizer, and harrow, seems gaining in favour with some advanced farmers in the Flats, and will probably soon be used here.

The improvements upon which South African farmers must fix their eyes for some time to come are mainly elementary. For instance, the extirpation of disease is more important than stock-breeding. It would be worth while to spend almost any sum in extirpating disease. Let us make that reparation at least to South Africa for our many blunders in the past. It is useless being discouraged by the enormity of the task, for we have only to remember the immense efforts which are maintained in this country to keep down loss from disease, and the large sums lavished for that purpose.

Again, the improvement and rectification of soils is positively of greater importance at the present time than the choice of crops. First, enough attention is not given to green soiling, which would return valuable humus to the land. Then, in the old days of wheat-farming in England, it was held to be a fatal heresy to deprive the land of its straw—at all events, on the best wheat-lands of Essex. That land produced on an average four quarters of wheat per acre, and in good years, under good farming, as much as six. The straw may be taken at upwards of 2 tons to the acre, the whole of which was returned upon the land, and it was always asserted that no other manure was so valuable upon arable land as this well-made farmyard dung.

In South Africa it is very seldom that the straw is

kept, even for stock-feeding. It is generally chaffed and disposed of in bales.

The denuding of the country of forests and bush has increased the necessity for green soiling and manuring as above described. But besides this there is a point which the wheat-land of Malmesbury suggests. How can the land be improved so as to bear irrigation? Are there no deposits of marl or calcareous soils to be dug out and applied as a top dressing? Would it answer to blast out clay-slates, expose them to the air and sun, mix them with farmyard manure, and cart them upon the land? Would irrigation supplied by pump-work through a hose or spray answer better than by currents?

Then there is the old problem of ridding the land of noxious weeds and planting in good grasses. It is said that English grasses will not answer, nor yet clover, except under irrigation. Lucerne would inevitably be choked by weeds in its early stage. But there is the creeping couch-grass, which is always sweet veldt, and which, once established, exterminates other grasses. It has the objection of being a bad weed in arable land, and it would be far more desirable to get a growth of white clover or rye if lucerne were too slow in starting.

It is only fair to state that even in this deeply-depressed district of Malmesbury there are Boers who are most anxious to avail themselves of any chance which may be open to them of improving their land.

This excellent feeling is more common at the present time than the general appearance of the country would lead one to suppose. What is needed is to give it an impetus, and by setting an example give these good fellows a lead over the fence. They are probably

hampered by want of capital in large undertakings or necessary experiments ; and for capital in farming we must look to men coming into the country. But there are still many improvements which could be followed out by men of small means, *if it were proved* that these alterations in system were the real road to success.

In the matter of arable land labour is always a great consideration. Still more is this the case where fruit or viticulture is concerned. Trained labour costs 2s. 6d. a day, and is difficult to obtain at that rate. But if the matter be examined, it will be found that little or nothing is done to train the Kaffir or improve his style of work. It would be worth any farmer's while who settled in such a district as Malmesbury, where other than herds are required as labourers, to do something towards improving his workmen and settling them near his house. For instance, a little attention to the whims and fancies of the Kaffirs would repay him a hundred-fold. First, one or two good workmen of the old slave or Cape class should be induced to come by good wages punctually paid ; and the addition of a small piece of land and a tidy hut, at a peppercorn rent. Other land might be left divided into slips, and the chances held out to additional ' boys ' or odd workmen to qualify or render themselves sufficiently valuable to merit being permitted to start a hut and take up a similar piece of land. The payment should be graded according to the value of the work done. It is absolutely certain that skilful farming requires skilful workmen. The old days, when ' anyhow ' did to grow fruit, and ' anyhow ' to pack it, are past. A better-informed class of farmer is coming into the country, and with him will come some young Englishmen who will work as overseers for a

year or two to learn the ways of the country and observe its climate. These men ought to be utilized to teach Kaffirs; but the value of the instructed Kaffir will only tell if he can be induced to settle down, and the surest inducement is a few rods of ground and a comfortable hut for himself.

THE INOCULATION OF SOILS AND 'NITRAGIN.'

Recent experiments and discoveries with regard to soil inoculation with nitrifying bacteria point to the existence of the necessity for soil fertilization, and might be profitably considered in South Africa. The subject is eminently scientific, and demands in the first place a careful preparation and manuring of the soil previous to inoculation. In fact, it appears certain that whether the bacteria are sown with the seed as 'Nitragin,' or whether inoculated soil taken from fields upon which lupins or other plants have been grown is applied at so much per acre, *there must have been careful preparation and fine tilth beforehand.*

Such subjects are the very cream of agricultural development. In the colonies, especially where, as in South Africa, the correction or improvement of soil is scarcely considered, simpler and readier means will be resorted to. What the precise want may be in any particular soil, only a scientific expert can decide. The practical English farmer coming into the country sees his crops go wrong, but does not know how to set them right. It is, however, impossible not to look with the strongest misgiving upon guano nitrates, and the dead-looking stuff dug out of ancient kraals. This last might be improved if mixed with marl or lime or gypsum, turned over and exposed to the air after the method of the English dunghill, but in its raw state it seems impossible that it should prove really beneficial. Whether the soil be exhausted or deficient signifies very little. The fact points to the land *requiring to be farmed*, and there is a great deal of land in this state in South Africa. On this subject the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England* for June, 1896 (especially the paper on 'Agricultural Problems in Plant Physiology'), may be read with interest by those who care to pursue agriculture scientifically.

Reference has been made to the methods of companies with regard to land, and another instance comes to hand of a slightly different character while this is being written.

An account appeared in the *Cape Argus* of November, 1896, of the discovery of petroleum wells in Cape Colony, but it seemed impossible that so important a discovery could have been made and left undeveloped. In the *Mining World and Record* for December 19 of the same year the discovery is referred to as follows :

PETROLEUM IN THE CAPE COLONY.

'During the last two or three years I have now and again alluded to the undoubted presence of petroleum at Ceres, in the north-western portion of this colony, and why something is not done towards its development passes my comprehension. This is what a well-qualified correspondent writes on the subject : "Having had a good deal of experience in Pennsylvania, both in the raising of oil and its utilization in various ways, I have taken some interest in what promises to be a large industry in the future of the Ceres district. It is a ten-mile drive from the station to the village, and upon arrival at the summit of Mitchell's Pass, from wherever I could see the valley, I was struck by the resemblance of the geological formation to that of Pennsylvania, where I have spent a considerable time, and in which place I learnt how to recognise the indications of petroleum. I called my companion's attention to it, and he agreed with me, having also had large experience in the drilling of wells in America. Strolling round the next day, we were astonished to see unmistakable surface indications of oil below, for wherever we went over the valley we saw oil floating on the pools of water, many of which were running. Upon inquiry, I found that a Kimberley syndicate had acquired mining leases for a long period over a vast amount of territory. In fact, I hear that the belt has been systematically traced for some sixty miles. If a similar oil territory were in America, there would long ago have been a hundred derricks belonging to different companies at work in the Ceres Valley alone."

'My correspondent is quite right ; a Kimberley syndicate has got this stupendous (I can use no other word) concession, but, like the dog in the manger, they will neither use it themselves, nor let anyone else do so.'

CHAPTER XXI.

FORESTRY.

THIS is a subject which the Government of Cape Colony has taken up zealously, and with great enterprise.

It is hoped that private companies will be formed, or individuals present themselves, ready to promote similar schemes to those which Government has initiated. Desirable as this would be, there are no indications at present of anything of the kind. Partly, no doubt, on account of the little information generally possessed with regard to the business, and partly because the returns from it are slow. No one cares nowadays to wait sixteen or seventeen years for the interest on his money. Nor can it be denied that there are risks incurred, although, as will presently be shown, science has done much to minimize the worst of these.

It is essential to success that expert knowledge of the first principles of forestry shall have been acquired before the business is entered upon in Africa. The best field for this elementary equipment is the school at Cooper's Hill, where the Indian forestry officials receive their training. It is from this school that most of the officials are selected to carry on the forestry department in Cape Colony. But it would be a grievous mistake to suppose that the matter of learning is ended there. Probably it never is ended, for fresh

facts relating to soils, aspects, altitudes, with their several effects upon trees, must be continually presenting themselves.

For farmers in general, some rudimentary knowledge ought to be acquired, in order to turn coarse or sandy land to account, or, what is a common case in Africa, to provide shelter from cutting winds. The department professes to supply this information gratis, and it should be one of the first steps taken by a farmer upon his land to avail himself of the assistance offered, just as he would borrow the Government bore to obtain water.

The principal facts to be known are: (1) What trees to plant; (2) how to plant them; (3) how to **protect** them.

It may even be desirable to take some steps of the kind, as it is not impossible that some legal regulations will be enforced with regard to the planting before long—at any rate, in all land the sale of which rests with Government. In such a case those farms which have been left treeless, or denuded of wood, will be considered less valuable than they are to-day. It is a matter for lasting regret that the subject was wholly overlooked in the first settlement of native locations, natives being permitted to cut down without being compelled to plant.

The development of South Africa offers three distinct uses for wood—as railway-sleepers, as mine-props, as firewood. Besides these purposes there is waggon-building; and certain trees, such as the wattle, are grown for their bark, though this trade belongs especially to Natal. There are also indigenous trees peculiar to South Africa, whose marketable value for cabinet-work in the European market is assured, could the

wood be properly felled, dried, and placed in the market on a level with the fast-diminishing mahogany.

In laying down land for forestry, it is first necessary to consider the special purpose for which the wood is planted. In fact, the owner must from the commencement make up his mind as to his ultimate intentions, for it would be useless to treat a forest as a high timber forest when only mine-props are required. The right kind of tree to suit the special object must be selected, and though this depends upon the soil, something also remains with the selection of the tree. For instance, the pine, which is generally grown for railway-sleepers, will not answer everywhere, but its place is very well taken by the cedar.

As regards profits, the future offers an immense field for timber. Building purposes and mines alone will continue to take all that can be provided, without diminishing very considerably the large import trade, for some years to come. But no scientific discovery has yet offered a substitute for the ordinary wooden railway-sleeper. As railways increase, the difficulty of providing sleepers will materially add to the cost of the lines, and this accounts for the anxiety on the part of Government to lose no time in planting forests of suitable trees.

'No doubt,' says the Government report of the Conservators of Forests, 'one of the most important uses of the Cluster pine timber in the future will be for railway-sleepers. . . . A simple calculation shows that if two-thirds of the area of the Uitvlugt Reserve, or 5,524 acres, were planted with Cluster pine, there would be produced annually 138,400 sleepers; assuming, with an annual acre increment of 100 feet, that five-eighths

of the wood production would be timber fit for sleepers, and that a sleeper contains $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubic feet, they could be supplied from Uitvlugt at a fraction the cost of the Kursna or imported sleeper. . . . The Uitvlugt Forest may be expected in thirty-five years to yield 4,833,500 sleepers, at a cost to the country of 2s. 7d. each.

‘The same sleepers imported have cost 5s. 6d. each.’

This shows very fair profits, for the cost of planting Cluster pines in the Uitvlugt sowings amounts to £1 7s. 4d. per acre. The other expenses are supervision for two years, fire protection for sixteen or eighteen years, and roads, which brings the total inclusive cost of planting as a complete work to £2 16s. 4d. per acre.* With a stock of 4,840 trees per acre, this gives seven marketable trees per rd., or about sixty-three per rd. of young trees produced with a normal stock of about one per square foot.

Although figures in agricultural matters are proverbially misleading, owing to the impossibility of reckoning the effects of soil, seasons, labour-supply, in one place against another, yet these estimates should be enough to convince farmers that there is business to be done in tree-planting. It is only fair to state that the great objection to tree-planting hitherto has been the risk from fire. It is an old African trick to burn grass with a view to getting an easy shot at a buck, and the habit seems to have become ingrained. But the science of tree-planting has been carried so far as to minimize this risk. By cutting roads, by fencing, and also by planting belts of fire-proof trees on the outskirts of the forest, much can be done to ward off attacking flames. Hitherto the greatest achievements of Govern-

* These figures are quoted from the Government report.

ment have been in districts near civilized centres. Perhaps the most remarkable is the reclaiming of the shifting sand-drifts near Capetown and Port Elizabeth. This sand is driven by the wind into undulating hills, covering the fertile soil below, and burying roads and railways in its march. By the planting of marram grass wherever it can be got to grow, the sand is held, but elsewhere the laying down of city refuse on the surface effects the same purpose ; then pines are planted, which grow fast in this locality, and make in due course a handsome return upon the outlay.

The Government has a large nursery from which plants are supplied to farmers desirous of trying them, or to townships, at a very low rate. Seeds of many kinds of trees are likewise supplied at almost cost price. The most commonly selected tree is the large blue-gum, but there are many kinds of eucalyptus which answer in different localities. Just at present the red-gum, though slower growing than the blue, is coming into favour. The importance of the Cluster pine has already been indicated, but there are also several other pines which answer well. The beautiful pencil cedar has of late years been in increasing demand. The Turkish oak is found to do better than the English, which requires a good deal of care, and seldom answers, except in the vicinity of the Cape. The Lombardy poplar grows very well near water, and may be seen making a magnificent line in the wide expanse of the Karroo. The Vaal willow develops to an enormous bulk in moist situations in Bechuanaland. A new tree recently introduced promises very well. It is the Kabyle ash from Algeria, and its timber is said to be quite equal to the English ash. Various kinds of acacia are popular

everywhere, especially those wattles useful for their bark. There are also the trees of the country, the stink-wood, sneeze-wood, and yellow-wood trees, which it is only fair to state are much better than their names.

These business considerations placed on one side, surely the mere visual satisfaction to any man possessing common affection for his farm or ordinary pride in his estate would induce him to beautify the landscape by planting the sides of his dam or the neighbourhood of his house with trees. Besides, too great stress cannot be laid upon the necessity for providing shade and shelter for cattle. It is far better to leave cattle loose in a well wooded or bushed country than to confine them in filthy kraals during cold winter nights. The heat of summer is equally injurious, even to the hardy strains of Kaffir and Afrikaner oxen, while to the delicate imported breeds the exposure is almost certain to result fatally.

The driving winds blow dust and sand into the reservoirs and assist evaporation. Many crops, *besides fruit and vines*, suffer almost to extinction if they are left without the shelter of trees against cutting winds. Nor can too much be said in favour of any scheme which would return vegetable mould to soil which needs it so sorely as that of South Africa. Bare and treeless as much of the country is now, this sad state has been brought about by the *actual demand* for sleepers, mine-props, and firewood, though grass fires are partly responsible. The returns to-day upon even small plantations are considerable, and those upon preserves of native bush in such a country as Bechuanaland will be so in a few years' time. This country has suffered especially from deforestation, and on this point the opinion ex-

pressed in the Government report is emphatic, and points as decidedly as any political grievance to the necessity for a new policy in Africa :

‘As an inland country, Bechuanaland must either supply its own timber or be cruelly taxed with 600 miles of haulage from the coast. Bechuanaland—especially in the north-eastern portion—has sufficient rain to grow good timber. The growth of planted trees here is similar to the wonderful growth of trees in the Transvaal. The natural bush is probably only suitable for firewood ; but this, cut over on short rotations and properly conserved, it would furnish economically and well. Here, again, it is a sad mistake to tax a young country with the supply of fuel from a distant source ; and this is what must inevitably happen if fuel reserves be not demarcated near the centres of population.’

CHAPTER XXII.

NATIVE AFFAIRS.

THE most critical feature in every civilized State is offered by the increase in the population of the lower orders. This increase is sure to be at a higher ratio than that in the upper classes. It is to be regretted that Malthus obscured his arguments by mixing them with details which revolted public taste, and so prevented his valuable matter from receiving the recognition it deserved, and exercising the salutary influence it should otherwise have done.

In South Africa, wherever we turn, we find the same problem, but with special features of its own. The lower orders, as represented by the Bantu tribes, are increasing at the rate of about four to one of the whites.* This disproportion is partly due to the removal of those causes which periodically decimated the tribes and at all times kept their numbers in check. British rule has removed the likelihood of famines, has rendered the practice of witchcraft less bloody where it has not extirpated it altogether; tribal wars are practically impossible, and slavery is, generally speaking, suppressed.

* Speaking roughly, there are about 800,000 whites in Africa, to over 4,000,000 blacks or Bantu; but these figures do not remain stationary.

So much for the deterrent. But, in addition, we shall find that British rule has done a good deal to encourage increase. It has brought wealth into the country, and the Kaffir, if he does not choose to work himself, can make his wives work. The more wives he has, the more produce he has for sale; the more daughters he possesses, the more numerous are his opportunities for barter. Thus it comes about that Kaffirs are gradually amassing wealth. The more shrewd amongst them appreciate the position perfectly. Acquisitiveness is their strongest characteristic. Next to this faculty is a curious sombre cynicism, a mixture of disbelief with the gloomiest superstition. This makes it quite possible for them to fasten on the white man's religion without its becoming a part of their nature. It is never difficult to teach them to sing hymns, for they have good voices and perfect ears; but to put into them the spirit to understand the meaning of the words is a hard nut for the missionaries.

There was a case in Cape Colony not long ago of a missionary who was himself a highly-cultivated and gifted man. He adopted a Kaffir boy, and taught him by degrees everything he knew himself, even to the singing of Italian songs. Once again it was the extraordinary imitative faculty of the Kaffir which proved deceptive, for one day the young fellow forged his master's name on a cheque.

This outward adornment of clothes, this assumption that the Kaffir is capable of Western feeling and thought, has been tried in Africa, and has not proved equal to dealing with the case, because we persist in ignoring the fact that civil laws, their formation and practice, have gone on side by side with Christianity,

and have assisted in the application of Christian teaching for centuries in this country. It is apt to be forgotten that our religion is based on the Ten Commandments, which in our Church are rightly ordered to be read as part of the service of the Divine Sacrament; that these Ten Commandments were the legal code which has influenced the laws of every civilized country.

What the Kaffir needs is some simple application of these elementary principles, and sufficient inducement to keep within the prescribed lines. To provide him with such a skeleton of civilized government, the Act known as the Glen Grey Act was passed and established. The object of this Act is a bold one, and from the first it was certain to incur the displeasure of certain philanthropists, for it is an attempt to inculcate a sense of duty by Act of Parliament.

Whether the native has fallen from a higher to a lower state of existence, or whether he is more nearly allied to 'the missing link' than ourselves, are really moot points. What confronts us is the fact that the animal side of his nature is more developed than even that of the average low-class white, while his intellectual faculties are dormant. The danger is their aptitude for imitating our civilized vices. Their desire to be like the white man is very sensitive, and vibrates pathetically against a natural barrier. Everything that they are shown they can do; but they cannot originate. Like the birds, they build as their fathers built. Like the jackal or hyena, they hunt as they have always hunted. This basis of savagery, combined with intelligent mimicry, requires careful correction by prudent and patient mental culture. The Kaffir bride in Kimberley

must be led to the altar in white satin and orange-blossoms, or she would rather dispense with the ceremony. Her husband, who sees his master eating pickles, will steal pickles to do the same, though they may grievously disagree with his Kaffir stomach. There is no such thing as caviar to the Kaffir million. This is true, generally speaking, of all the Bantu tribes, for however strongly it may be asserted to the contrary, rare individuals remain individuals. They may be cited as remarkable instances, but they do not represent a class.

One common fallacy is to dwell on the poverty of the 'poor blacks.' But taken *en masse*, the native population of Africa compares very favourably with the poor in any European country. In fact, the poor class is not the native, but the 'mean white.' Here steps in another difficulty—that the poor white is so ready to meet the aspirations of the well-to-do black, and unite in marriage, producing a race of half-castes which form the most objectionable feature in the population. Nature herself bears witness to the distinction in race by the deplorable result of these mixed marriages. The power of amassing money is so strong in Kaffirs that some of them have lately come forward as capitalists, and compete against Europeans in the sale of produce—notably wheat from Basutoland. It is extremely difficult to get them to take employment under masters. They prefer to make their wives work, while they exercise their skill in disputing bargains. This semi-civilization has somehow robbed the Kaffir of the gentlemanly bearing he possesses in the raw state. Wrapped in his blanket or karross, in his well-kept and beautifully-built hut, he is a grand figure; but

clothed in European garments, which never seem to fit his figure, aping manners and customs he neither appreciates nor understands, he is 'a bore' like any other parvenu. He has the same disagreeable assumption of equality, and tiresome habits of inquiry and close scrutiny. No doubt his natural taste inclines him on the sly to the ways of his fathers, not a bit less than the parvenu in Mayfair, who hankers after the tripe and onions washed down by adulterated beer in White-chapel, while he perforce must swallow mayonnaise of chicken and champagne. Human nature has much in common everywhere, and money and 'cutting a dash' are the new gods which the Kaffir selects among those which the nineteenth century offers him; and how shall we blame him?

Before the Glen Grey Act was passed, something was done by locating or settling the natives, and Government possessed the power to grant them land on individual tenure at an annual quit-rent. A few availed themselves of this, but the bulk would not pay for the survey and title-deeds. They had nothing to pay for the ground.

The first move to check population was made by the levy known as the Hut Tax, by which every native who built a hut was compelled to contribute 10s. annually. According to Kaffir custom, every wife requires a separate hut, the husband living with each in turn, and being very careful not to create jealousy. Wives are native property, and represent so many head of cattle. If a Kaffir wants to marry, he inquires for a suitable girl whose father will be content with the number of cattle he can afford to give for her, therefore female children represent so much future wealth in cattle as purchase-

money. It is in this traffic in cattle and wives that most of the Kaffir tribal wars have originated. Either women or cattle were scarce, and the only way to obtain them was by making war on a tribe which was rich in either. Thus, for centuries the Bantu have driven each other out of first one country and then another, so that no tribe can be said to have inhabited the same spot for fifty consecutive years. After she is purchased, the wife contributes to her husband's maintenance by her toil, and not unfrequently to his wealth, so that the Hut Tax does not always operate as desired. It is generally understood that it is her business to earn money in addition to the rest of her lord's demands. The women are never idle a moment. Their lives are simply unresting, and their bent and weary figures may be seen hoeing the land, thrashing the mealies, cooking the food, grinding the corn, making the pottery, drawing and carrying the water and wood, thatching and plastering the hut, while the man lounges about smoking or goes out hunting with parties, chaffers over the sale of his skins and mealies, races his pack-ox, and directs his women's labour.

Kaffir custom openly permits the grossest immorality. Every wife may possess a lover by common consent, and this is especially the case when quite young girls marry very old men, the lover's children being the husband's property, and treated on an equality with his own. It is lawful for the husband to impose a small fine on the lover, and beat his wife, but the custom is so generally recognised that these steps are rarely resorted to.

These things are horribly candid, yet in spite of customs far more loathsome even than the above, with

that strange perversity of nature, or, rather, with the reversion to a higher state which renders it impossible not to believe that these unhappy Bantu had a great past, love-marriages actually take place, and Kaffirs are capable of wonderful single-hearted and lifelong devotion.

It is part of the prevailing confusion in things native that even the wife-purchase system has its good side, and cannot be condemned at present. The cattle are paid and received as security for the woman, and afford both her and her children substantial protection. Thus, a Kaffir may chastise his wife, but he may not maim her by dismemberment or kill her. If he attempt to do so, she may claim protection from the relative (whether father, brother, uncle, or guardian) who received the cattle for her; and this protection and assistance is bound to be rendered her to the amount of the cattle paid for her. It is therefore not held to be desirable to encourage men to ill-treat their wives, as the woman's relations object to have to part with the cattle for maintenance. Kaffir law and customs are rigidly enforced and maintained by the old women, the mothers of the tribe; and the women generally would be the first to resent any alteration of the law of purchase. In fact, the greatest vanity is displayed on this score, and the Kaffir woman has no higher boast than the number of cattle paid for her. For a woman to marry without being paid for in cattle simply amounts to no marriage settlement, and no security for her children.

This is the case in favour of the maintenance of Kaffir law; but there is much to be said against it, chiefly because it leads to a good deal of stealing and cattle-lifting. To the native mind there is no disgrace whatever attaching to the theft of cattle. Now that legiti-

mate war is put an end to, the easiest, sometimes the only, way to obtain a wife is by stealing the white man's cattle, for, as has been already stated, Kaffirs do not care to work for a master, and so earn money. Those who do come out of their villages, and work at the mines or the docks, invariably invest their savings in cattle and wives; but there is a large proportion who will not work, and see no harm in theft. They have their peculiar logic on this point, as on most others. 'The white man has taken our land, which is food for our cattle; *ergo* we have no land and no cattle, therefore we must take the white man's cattle. The white man will not let us fight to get wives, therefore we must steal.' They will not see that their very existence is due to the white man, and that he offers them better ways of gaining what they want.

The wife difficulty is very great among poor Kaffirs, and those who have been unfortunate enough to lose their cattle, or cannot earn enough to purchase sufficient to obtain a wife, sometimes club together and buy a wife between two or three of them. This is a particularly hateful custom, and one which is on the increase. There is really nothing to be said in its defence, and the men who practise it are the worst and lowest of their kind.

The respect shown to the old women of the tribe is linked with the superstition of witchcraft, which is probably a survival of some dark old creed that no one has got to the bottom of yet. Most Kaffirs believe in one God, but if questioned about Him, they are reserved, and their answers are negative. Some of them believe in a devil, who is worshipped in the dance. These dances are very awful, being chiefly of a licentious

nature, and utterly ungraceful. They pretty generally practise circumcision, which is a great rite; and there is a corresponding ceremony for girls, at which there is a 'reed dance.' These functions, especially among the inland tribes, are associated with the most revolting licentiousness, so that it is hardly conceivable that the people who practise such sensuality can perpetuate their kind.

For the most part the tribes possess totems, and their names have a meaning. Zulu signifies Celestial, and the Bechuana tribes are very distinct and emphatic as to their titles. Barolong, for instance, signifies 'the people of the iron,' iron having been discovered and smelted by a great chief; they therefore 'dance' to the iron as the Batlapin 'dance' to the fish.

The whole world is full of spirits, but some tribes are more in fear of ghostly interference than others. The spirits reside in dim subterranean caverns, and emerge in the form of animals. The spirits of the dead also undergo a kind of transmigration, so that their animal worship is closely allied to ancestor worship, and is greatly encouraged by the witch-doctors. Serpents are treated with especial reverence, but it is aquatic creatures and deep secret pools of water round which the darkest of their mysticism clings. Crocodiles are averred to possess dwellings under the water, with furniture and cattle, and it is from communion with these apparently silent creatures that the medicine-men and witch-doctoresses obtain their knowledge and skill. It is held that the spirits which live beneath the waters inhabit another world, but similar to that known to Kaffirs. Sometimes they call to a human being, who must perforce go to them, and is dragged down to their

habitations, and never returns to the upper world to live with his people again. It is possible sometimes to induce the spirit who is jealous to accept an ox or heifer in place of the human being, and truly pitiful stories are told of the Kaffirs offering their best and choicest animals in exchange for the drowned wife or child.

The language of Kaffirs is often very musical, and several grammars have been produced of Zulu and Secquana and others. For the most part the deficiency in terms of affection, kindliness, or endearment, is very marked. In Secquana there is no such word as 'gratitude'—indeed, it would be hard to convey the idea by any combination of words. On the other hand, they will describe the humiliation and death of an enemy in excellent terms, '*You will see war with red eyes! The lizards shall make their homes in your skull!*' is finely suggestive, and of this kind of thing there is an abundance. With humour it is much the same. They giggle incessantly, but their jokes are too feeble to be worth sampling.

Another peculiarity, which does not diminish the difficulty of dealing with Kaffirs, is their continual dispersion. There is no national feeling, such as at one time existed in Scotland for a particular mountain or glen. The desire for land is insatiable greed. 'Land,' says Khama, 'is food for the people; without it they will die.' Which is similar to other expressions, 'that land is eaten or drunk,' or that they are 'hungry' (viz., for land).

It is almost necessary for them thus to change and to keep on wandering, because they invariably exhaust the soil where they are settled for any time, and the history of Glen Grey affords a very fair example of

Kaffir behaviour in matters territorial, and is an interesting bit of Kaffir history.

Up to the commencement of the century Glen Grey was occupied by Bushmen. In 1827 hostilities commenced by an unknown northern tribe cutting the Tembus into two sections, one of which was driven into Cape Colony, and occupied the district of Queenstown and Glen Grey.

In the Kaffir outbreaks which followed, these people sided invariably against the colony, till in the war of 1850-53 they were thoroughly beaten, after which Sir George Cathcart took from them the present district of Queenstown, which he divided between Europeans and Fingos, and confined the Tembus to Glen Grey.

Later on Sir Philip Wodehouse wished to settle Glen Grey with some drafts of cavalry which the Imperial Government was withdrawing from the frontier. To facilitate this, an arrangement was made with the Tembus to give them ground elsewhere, double in extent, in exchange for Glen Grey. This offer the Tembus accepted, but asked for time to gather their crops—always an important feature in Kaffir affairs. This was agreed to, and they sent over to the new country their young people, who took possession of it in advance and built huts. But when the crops were gathered, the old people refused to leave Glen Grey, and by this means they obtained possession of both countries.

In a short time the increase of population obliged the Government to consider the state of Glen Grey, and this resulted in the Act for the settlement of Glen Grey, which contains the pith and marrow of the Cape policy with regard to natives.

Its first object was to secure the land to the natives and prevent them from selling it and wandering elsewhere, wasting their money and becoming vagrants. It is, in fact, a scheme to inculcate ideas of economy and self-improvement somewhat on the same basis as our own land laws, which have long exercised an educating influence on the British people.

There is a small annual quit-rent on the land, which is paid to the general revenue. A District Council, endowed with rating powers, is intended to promote some idea of self-government, and appears to be having this effect. To this District Council every male has to pay 10s. a year, unless he can show that he has been in service for three months, or has expended so much labour upon his own fields as to have been unable to work for another man. This rule is very liberally interpreted; infirm people are always excused, and any good reason for non-payment is readily accepted. The natives call the tax 'the lazy tax,' and though they pay it cheerfully, they are always very proud of showing that they can escape it. Encouragement is afforded any native who will exert himself to qualify in any way, and many of them become interpreters—a post for which they appear to have a natural aptitude. The pay is good, and they are extremely vain of occupying the position.

The strongest feature in the Act, and one which has caused many disputes, is the inalienability of land. The land assigned to a Kaffir can only pass to the eldest son of his great-wife, who is his heir according to Kaffir custom. The only alienation possible is the seizure of land for debt, and its sale. This clause was inserted as a check upon debts incurred at stores; otherwise at the death of the Kaffir the son of the

great-wife (viz., son by a chief's daughter whom he has selected or had selected for him as his great-wife) succeeds to the land. The wife of his youth and the wife of his right hand have claims in lesser degree upon the live-stock and movables; but the land itself is inalienable, and the offspring of the general concubinage cannot settle upon it or divide it between them.

This imposes a check upon polygamy, as the women themselves do not like the prospect for themselves and their children of being turned adrift, nor do their relations care to maintain them out of the 'ikazi,' or marriage cattle.

The next feature of importance is the remittance of the tax upon service. Even the smallest incentive to industry amongst the men is a boon, and it works out exactly as it is intended to do, for the remittance adds the dignity of reward and independence to labour.

Those who object to the Act on the ground that it is a form of forced labour are silent upon the fact that left to himself the Kaffir will not work, but enslaves others. It is an anomaly that, while as a nation we are always protesting against Arab slavery, and priding ourselves on our Christianity and laws freeing the slave wherever we go, we yet permit, under the cloak of 'tribal customs' or 'native rights,' revolting cruelty and infamous slavery. The Christian Bechuana with his Vaalpens—who is sent to live at posts and hold them in his master's name long after cattle have been removed, and who dies there of slow starvation—is one of the most hateful instances, but it is one on which the missionaries are silent. The subjection of woman to the will of her husband and master is

nowhere better exemplified than among Kaffirs; but it is a form of slavery which jumps quite happily with the Church's ordinance, and therefore we hear little or nothing about it.

The most tangible objection to the Act is, that it legislates for natives otherwise than for white men. 'One law for both' is the cry of people who forget that laws are of no advantage which are not the result of circumstances. The native's nature and natural surroundings are totally different to the white man's. We legislate for minors, for paupers, for drunkards, and for peers, and why not for Kaffirs?

The best argument in favour of the scheme is the improved condition of Glen Grey itself, and the fact that some form of the same policy, modified to suit particular circumstances, is gradually being considered throughout South Africa. So far as the raw Kaffir is concerned, there is no doubt that, taken simply, the Act teaches him the elements of civilization, and weans him gradually from his savage vices. But the most difficult cases to deal with are those of native locations near towns. On the outskirts of many towns, such as Grahamstown, there is a large population, which is very often a mixture of Hottentots, Fingos, and Bastards. Some of these have their own erven, or holdings, on which they live, and which they cultivate with the assistance of their families. Most of the men and many of the women obtain employment in the town under Europeans as domestic servants, and some of them are respectable, and even thrifty. But the great vice amongst these people is that of drunkenness. A law passed to prevent the sale of drink to Kaffirs would result in immense benefit to the whole

colony. It is this drunkenness which leads to theft, especially stock-stealing, and the losses from cattle-stealing are a perpetual drain upon the farmers of the colony. It is the constant theme of the reports on native affairs, and the words of one Commissioner on the subject may be taken as stating the case for all :

‘In connection with this subject of stock-stealing, I find that the thieves are, in almost all cases, men who have demoralized themselves by drinking. Drink and theft among the natives go hand-in-hand, and where the one is the other must be. . . . I have found that the industrious, hard-working native who has hired a bit of ground is not, as a rule, the man who steals.’

In certain districts an attempt has been made to place local restrictions on the sale of brandy to Kaffirs. This has been done in the Eastern Provinces, and the following is an extract from a report on the division of King Williamstown :

‘The inclination and appetite for drink merely lies like a smouldering fire . . . which the first faint breeze . . . is certain to fan into a raging flame. It is sad beyond measure to see this once splendid race slowly but surely declining, and becoming more and more demoralized. With regard to the restrictions upon the sale of liquor to natives in certain areas in this division, a great deal has been said and written. I have watched the working of these restrictions very closely, having unusual facilities for doing so, and I think the results are sufficiently satisfactory to justify us not only in restraining them, but in extending them to other areas. And in this view I am borne out by the natives themselves. It is commonly argued that smuggling is carried on to such an extent as practically

to remove the restrictions. In the first place, I take the liberty of doubting this statement. It is a bare assertion made by interested persons, whose trade has probably suffered by these restrictions. Secondly, smuggling, or, as the Kaffirs term it, "smousing," in brandy was carried on to a large if not fully to the same extent before the areas were ever proclaimed. Besides, the style of smuggling practised by the natives could very easily be suppressed if other methods of smuggling could be checked. I grant that it seems an unfair and invidious thing to place restrictions on certain licensed places, and not upon others but a short distance from them; but that is a defect of the law. It is a short-sighted and a cruel act to allow canteens in the very heart of large native populations, where they are liable to neither supervision nor control. And that is pretty much the condition of nearly all the canteens in the proclaimed areas. I am confident that I express the prayer of over 30,000 souls when I pray the Government not to revive the canteens already closed, nor to consent to the removal of the restrictions now in force. In the total prohibition of the sale of liquor to natives lies the future welfare and prosperity of the black races, and although the question is surrounded with difficulties, I sincerely trust that the day is not far distant when it will become an accomplished fact. In the meantime it might well be extended in large native centres.'

This extract, given verbatim, states the case as it has remained for upwards of ten years in Cape Colony. The brandy interest of the Western Province Boers will always be maintained while the Bond rules, and this interest, it is needless to say, is in favour of the

unrestricted sale of spirits to Kaffirs. Not long ago a leading member of the Bond lamented that the able administrators sent by Great Britain to India had not had their counterpart in Africa. But here is only one instance of brave and unflinching statement, by a man who knows his work and respects his office, which has been put on one side for ten years by the action of the Bond. Of what avail is it for the best reports to be written to a Government which cannot, will not, or dare not act upon them ?

Among these semi-civilized Kaffirs the custom of giving 'ikazi' (cattle in payment for wives) is becoming rare. The young men go into the towns and work for wages, gradually acquiring trades. As they increase in number, the difficulty of obtaining land near towns becomes greater every year. These young men form a numerous body in every town, and see no prospect of marrying on the old custom. The girls of the same class encourage them in setting aside the old law, which had much to recommend it, but which, if it were maintained, would certainly prevent the marriage of many Kaffirs.

The wages of Kaffirs employed upon farms vary from 10s. to 15s. a month. They are by nature well adapted to agricultural work, and some of them show remarkable skill as carpenters, or even joiners. It would be very beneficial to the farming interest in general if greater restrictions were placed upon the cattle owned by Kaffirs. It will never be possible to effect an appreciable reduction in disease until Kaffir herds are watched, and cattle suffering from red-water, lung sickness, and similar complaints are properly dealt with.

At the docks in Capetown and elsewhere it is common for a headman to bring down a section of his tribe to work under contract for a certain period of time. It might be possible for farmers, when labour is scarce, to obtain some similar arrangement. There is an immense difference in the value of Kaffir labour. The Fingos entertain a somewhat too exalted opinion of their value; the Bechuana is generally lazy, though not lacking in intelligence; the Griquas are the greatest drunkards; the Korana makes a horseman, and frequently rides well; the Bushman is the worst all round morally; the Basuto surpasses all others in education and work, but the Zulu would probably run him close if he were trained.

The subject of the Kaffirs, their past and future, is a fascinating one, and practically inexhaustible. It is, however, dangerous to allow theories and sentiment to intrude into the case. It is best for them that they should be ruled strictly as an inferior race by every farmer who employs them, and the terms of their contract, whatever it may be, rigorously enforced. But this implies no necessity for cruelty. It is very questionable whether cutting a Kaffir to pieces with the lash either reduces his spirit or improves his morals as much as some people appear to believe. There is another force far more potent, and one which exerts undoubted and salutary influence. It is the power of moral force, which is all the more certain in its effects because the Kaffir hardly understands it. Strict justice and perfect fearlessness will avail much further than harshness or kindness, which is certain to be mistaken for timidity. No man should ever break his word to a Kaffir, and whatever the agreement made for wages, it should be promptly and punctually kept.

There is one other point on which the Kaffir is sensitive, and that is his stomach. If he is ill, he is certain to be impressed by a remedy which relieves his pain far more than by a thrashing. At all times a pill, if it is strong enough, is more efficacious than a stick. He also has his own notions about creature comfort. Again, on this score it is not wise to pamper the Kaffir; yet, again, he need not be treated worse than a dog. Our conquest of Africa has taught us that if there is a supreme question between the black man and the white, the black man must be shot. And this fact is so stern and terrible a necessity that on it we must base our strongest claim for patient and fair dealing for the black. It emphasizes the necessity for a policy which shall train the Kaffir in the elements of civil government, and fit him to eventually bear a responsible position.

For the most part, Englishmen start with showing too much kindness to Kaffirs, with the result that, finding it abused, they become indignant, and go to the opposite extreme. After a year or two they settle down, but it is a thousand pities that they cannot 'start fair' at once.

NOTE.—During the last Session a Bill was passed which places some restrictions on the sale of drink to Kaffirs; and it seems probable that the measure will be enforced. It is only fair to recognise this step in the right direction.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NATAL.

It is customary to speak of Natal as 'the garden colony,' and those who wish to depreciate it call it 'the colony of samples.' The Natalians are apt to wince, at least, at the last appellation, but, in good truth, both terms are at once very complimentary and suitable.

The country, when compared with the Cape, is as lovely as a garden. There is a snugness about the scenery which, with its fine sparkling rivers and round green hills, recalls Kent. Pretty nooks, with a tangle of creepers over rocks and trees and murmuring cascades, make it as a country extremely romantic and charming. Indeed, it is scenery to make love in, and people brought up in the melancholy Karroo or harsh Kalahari should set apart a portion of their lives for Natal.

It is a land which invites man to come to it, for there are no thirsts, and every kind of fruit and flower grows there luxuriously.

Bamboo, sugar-cane (of two sorts), tea, coffee (of the best quality), maize, beans, and most vegetables; plums, pineapples, apricots, mangoes, mangosteens, peaches, apples, grapes, custard-apples, bananas, pawpaws; yellow-wood, wattle, and stink-wood trees—these are

among the natural products of the country, besides many kinds of grasses, the precise use of which in manufactures has not yet been ascertained.

In addition, sheep, dairy cattle, and Angora goats answer very well, as do ostriches in the thorn veldt. Horses are better both in breeding and other respects than at the Cape. In addition, the mineral wealth is known to be considerable, the coal-beds are very extensive, and gold has been found in quantities which, it is believed, will prove very paying.

Yet this country, which Bishop Gall described as an emerald set in a sapphire sea, has witnessed the saddest disasters to the arms of our country, and remained unprosperous for many years. It is even now only beginning to emerge from a long period of depression.

In accounting for this strange neglect of a remarkably fertile territory, we must remember the years during which Great Britain was paralyzed by the advice of statesmen who, so far from assisting the colonies, were totally blind to their value, and determined to snub, rather than encourage, their development.

Natal may be taken as a remarkable instance of what commerce may achieve single-handed. The nation failed to comprehend the use of Natal. Luck and the fortunes of war were sadly against her, for the gold-mines belied all that was prophesied of them in days when heavy stamps were practically unknown; and Majuba Hill still rears its monumental head, recording against the sky the wretched generalship which there disgraced Great Britain. Yet one other chance was left, and Natal owes her present prosperity and the brilliant future which lies before her to a handful of energetic merchants who steadily pushed the wheels of their little

State. The success of Natal is due solely to commercial enterprise.

These men escaped the company-mongering which has fairly ruined the Cape land. Yet Natal was not too far to feel the good effects of the discovery of diamonds at the Vaal River in 1870. Transport-riding to the diggings became very profitable, for there were then no railways, and all provisions had to go up on the roads. Some men went to Kimberley and made money out of the diamond business, and brought their gains back to Natal. After this, what had only been a few houses running to the Point became the flourishing port of Durban, with the large merchants' warehouses along the quays, broad, well-kept streets, and fine public buildings.

Durban, whose fortunes have been driven by her merchants, is the best town in South Africa. There is no poverty, there is no dirt, and, though the situation is low, the death-rate is small. Living is extremely cheap, and altogether the town suggests what might be done elsewhere, if some of the Durban policy were successfully copied. Unquestionably it was a wise move for the municipality to keep the disposal of a large acreage in its own hands, and so prevent the building companies and jerry-builders in general getting possession of property, and rack-renting the people.

The first object of the merchants has been to secure a large forwarding trade to Johannesburg. The second, to settle a large white population—British if possible—in Natal as consumers of European goods.

To this end, great encouragement is given to artisans and mechanics, and what with the scheme by which these men easily become owners of their own houses

and gardens, good and cheap education for children, a free reading-room, and excellent baths, the working class in Durban is better off than anywhere else in Africa.

But, in common with the rest of the country, Natal is beginning to consider how raw products can be developed to fill the ships with return cargoes, and for this development another class besides artisans and mechanics is required. By dint of perseverance and considerable skill, backed by the outlay of an enormous sum of money, the harbour bar has been reduced, and though its final removal still offers an unsolved problem, large ships can frequently pass into the smooth water and discharge at the quay. There is talk of Durban becoming a naval coaling-station, and the output from the Dundee collieries has been increased to meet greater demands, while other coalfields beyond the Tugela are about to be opened. Now that the railway connects Durban with Johannesburg, it is thought that some of the magnates of the Rand may build houses at Durban on the hill called the Berea ; and treat the town, with its verdure and sunny loveliness, as London men treat Brighton.

All these matters, none of which are beyond the range of possibilities in the near future, point to the large increase of the purchasing power of Durban market. What, then, has been the history of the land in Natal ?

Until the close of the last Zulu war, very little had been done in agricultural development. These Kaffirs are a powerful and warlike race, even in the present day ; but prior to the Zulu war, with the doings of the treacherous and monstrosly cruel Tchaka still fresh in

men's memories, it was not wonderful if few people cared to live far out upon the veldt. There was no security whatever for money invested in farming, for at any time a native rising might mean the destruction of buildings, crops, and live-stock, consequently it was a matter of sheer impossibility to insure a farm-house, nor would anyone take up mortgages on land. Prices, it is true, ruled higher then than now, especially in the matter of trek oxen, for which a good price could always be obtained; but owing to the dread of Kaffir raids the land was only half cultivated, and stock-raising was a precarious business.

This has changed so far that land offers to-day a first-class security, and well-furnished farm-houses are easily insured for 2s. 6d. per cent. A prosperous business is done in imported stock, and land has doubled in actual value.

It cannot be supposed that this improved condition of things is entirely due to improved methods of farming. Neither can it be ascribed to higher prices, for, as already stated, the prices of most raw products have fallen instead of rising. More money has been invested in farming, but it has not always been wisely invested. There are complaints of distress among farmers, and the contention is strongly maintained in Natal that farming does not pay.

On the other hand, with land obtainable at £1 an acre, and good fresh butter fetching 2s. 6d. per lb. in Durban, it is obvious that there is money in the business somewhere.

It should, however, be borne in mind that the farming industry in Natal is passing through an initial stage, which in some respects resembles the experimental condition in Cape Colony. Until things have been

exploited, and the right stamp of men settled in sufficient numbers, it is not fair to do more than refer to the incidental features of the case. There must be no generalization.

Before the railway was opened, and especially during the Kaffir wars, transport-riding was a very sound, lucrative business. The defences of Durban were at that time most inadequate, and the dread lest the city should fall into the hands of the Zulus made men ready to pay anything for a chance of security. Very curious stories are still told of the ignorance and mismanagement of the Imperial soldiers and officials, and of the gross imposition practised upon them by transport-riders.

After the war these men found their occupation diminished, and they began to look round for some investment for their gains. The land offered them the most congenial life, and therefore something like a scramble ensued for good farms, purchased from Government in the usual manner at a public auction. Later on, the opening of the railway threw many more spans out of employment, and this resulted in a further settlement.

The effect of all this was to raise the price of land, without in any way altering the chances of markets, or adding a scrap to the improvement of transport. Land became dearer without being a penny the better in a single respect. These men, apart from their having no knowledge of farming, were not the right stamp to develop any industry. As a class, their knowledge of cattle is limited to trek oxen, and they know nothing whatever of stock-breeding, far less of cropping ground. Then, the life they lead as riders utterly unfits them for hard work. We may find many points of resemblance

between the African transport-rider and the London hay-carter, of whom it is said that, once on the road for six consecutive months, he is unfit for regular farm work to the end of his days.

Had the money which these transport-riders put into the business been in the hands of a different order of men, the result would doubtless have been different. They had been wanderers on the face of the earth, and the fixed routine of farm life was unbearable to them. The old nomad spirit rebelled against the monotony of dwelling perpetually upon one spot, and they possessed as little taste for farming as they did knowledge of the business. The land remained undeveloped, and the owners became poorer instead of richer, for there is nothing so costly as land which is not made to pay. All the cattle diseases possible to the country flourished and became rampant under their ignorant hands, and consequently there were complaints, grumbling, and dissatisfaction. Then the goldfields of the Rand were discovered, and transport-riders were wanted to fetch up machinery, building materials, and provisions. As soon as the railway from Cape Colony was finished, the development of Rhodesia required still further transport. Many of these Natal farmers went back only too gladly to their old life of transport-riding. Some went in the pay of forwarding agents, but others collected such oxen as were left upon their land, sold their farms, and trekked away with their waggons. Thus, the land has been slowly passing out of the hands of one class of men into those of new owners, and therefore farming in Natal is still scarcely developed, and practically without a history.

The upset price of Government land in Natal is 10s.

at acre and twenty years to pay it in with the condition of occupation. There are very few mortgages, and practically no other conditions. But nearly all the Government land is disposed of. Lately the value has risen, for the rent will sometimes reach at Government sales 30s. an acre under the twenty-years system. The rise in the value is in part due to the railway extension, but most farms have received small additions, though seldom under the occupancy of the transporters—a certain amount of fencing has been done, small inexpensive houses have been built, and wells sunk. In a few cases men have already occupied their land sufficiently long to feel a sentimental value attaching to it, after the manner of English landlords, and these men would not be induced to sell their land for four times the price they gave for it. The fact of some land being unpurchasable, and other land selling at double its cost at Government sales, has undoubtedly done much to enhance the value of land in general. Therefore the price in Natal is generally reckoned to be high. On the other hand, the soil is very rich, and it is a much better watered territory than Cape Colony; in fact, a farmer may do without any irrigation at all for years in most of the districts. It is unquestionably better suited to small holdings. Upon its slopes even a small block of 150 acres will provide a variety of chances. The aspect, soil, and altitude varying so much enable a man to have many different crops coming to perfection at different times. In this way he can avoid having all his eggs in one basket, and all his anxiety at one season. Then, the water difficulty is far less than elsewhere; the rainfall is equal and regular, and the cost of irrigation where necessary is very small.

There was one signal attempt which Government made to retain small holdings, with a view to encouraging small capitalists. A block of land was selected for the purpose in the Newcastle division, divided into strips, and put up to auction. It was sold immediately to a lot of young Dutchmen, who rushed the prices up to exorbitant figures. They had just enough money left to pay the first necessary instalment, and no more. Many of them had not the few shillings wherewith to buy a single sheep. They could only 'squat' on the ground and await events. When Government came down on them to pay the annual instalment, they openly declared that they had not the money. In all probability, had this occurred in Cape Colony the debt would have been deferred or excused; but in Natal the Dutch vote does not exercise control, nor is there an Afrikaner Bond in the case. Government therefore held firmly to the bargain, and insisted upon payment, and since that time it must be stated, to the credit of these men, that some of them are to this day making efforts to clear themselves of their lawful debts. Others either could not or would not rise to the emergency. An easier way was shown them by a land-grabber from Durban, who offered to buy them out. Since then he has thrown the property into one estate, and turned it into a big sheep-run. So ended the best attempt on the part of Government to initiate small holdings in Natal.

But the failure in this instance must on no account be accepted as pointing a moral as to anything but the purchase of land by people who take no thought for the future. What, in the name of common-sense, is the use of land *per se*? No man would buy a shop for the


pleasure of seeing his name over the door, or take out a license to trade with an empty waggon. Yet plenty of men believe that somehow or other it pays to buy land in the colonies. At any rate, in Africa it does not pay, unless a man has the capital to spend in development. Nor is it sufficient to have a small capital. The capital must be in proportion to the land, and to be under-capitalized in a large concern is to labour under enormous difficulties, and perhaps be worsted in the long-run. It is, of course, admissible for a man to purchase cheaply, if he can do so, a larger acreage than he can develop himself; for he may treat part of the land as a speculation, and by a little fencing and a few buildings, and perhaps a tank for water, he may dispose of the property at a good deal over cost price, most especially if he has also developed his own property alongside by adding a good road, a store-house, and a garden for fruit and vegetables.

The rise in the value of land in Natal may be ascribed to one other important cause—the improvement in the value of certain products. This does not apply to stock and mealies, but to other produce, such as tea and sugar. There is also a demand for fresh vegetables and fruit, and small patches are cultivated by coolies, who in part live by the produce, and in part on it. It is true that the fruit in the market is very often a glut. But the tinning industry benefits by this, and this in turn benefits the sugar industry. Pineapples at 9d. the dozen cannot possibly pay the grower. But, then, the coolie lives on them himself, and as they grow on railway embankments, or rubbish-heaps, where nothing else will do, there is not much loss. This, however, is not what is wanted. It would answer to improve the

cultivation of the pine in Natal, just as it has been improved in the Azores. Natal is the home of the pine as well as Brazil, but it remains uncultivated. There are some pines occasionally in the market called Queen pines, which fetch 2s. 6d. apiece, but even the flavour and quality of these is not up to the best Azores pine. Considering that these pines ripen in Natal in November and December, what a splendid chance is open to an energetic grower who is determined to lay hold of the European market! It seems absurd to look into the fruit-shops in the rich city of Johannesburg and find these miserable little Natal pines. What would be thought if London were supplied with crab-apples out of the hedges or wild cherries?

The same drawback applies to the garden produce in Natal as in Capetown. There is no variety of kinds, and the market is flooded with one vegetable or one fruit all at once. It is always a feast or a fast. For six weeks it will be all French beans, and nothing else; then six weeks of lettuces; then six weeks of peas, and so on. The first necessity is an English manager to direct coolie or Kaffir labour. It would take an Englishman at least a year to understand the seasons, but that time need not be all loss, for he could be establishing his business in other respects. It would be as well for two or three men to go out together, as innovations of any kind are very difficult to initiate single-handed in Africa.

The above actualities must be taken only as a hint at the solution of the problem how, given excellent climate and soil and fair markets, men fail in making a living. In this country we know that a man who has not sufficient capital to set up business for himself is better off as a workman. In South Africa the same



applies, with this difference, that the capital wanted will be less ; but the intelligence necessary will be more, for there is little or no chance of learning a business. There are very few businesses which have had time to develop methods, and the new-comer must invent them for himself.

This brings us to the fact that it is very hard, or almost impossible, to say what capital a man would require. The fruit trade is a business where the work would be divisible, and therefore three men might engage in it at once without being in each other's way. One might be the salesman in Durban, one the overseer of the garden, and one the packer, sorter or buyer to take the supplies into town. Three men with £300 apiece, if they were steady, industrious, and capable, might find a good opening for their capital in Natal ; and for small capitalists it does not seem that there is any other prospect. One thing is essential : they must possess the faculty for managing coloured labour. It is necessary to be somewhat explicit on these points, because it is very common to hear Natal cited as the country specially designed by Providence for small capitalists, while in reality most of the opportunities in this colony require the investment of large sums.

There are factories being started for the tinning and preserving of fruit near Durban ; but with the railway open to Johannesburg, and the possibility of the removal of the prohibitive tariffs by the annulling of the Customs Union, the market for fresh fruit appears likely to increase. Nor can it be questioned that, were the fruits worked up to a higher standard, a large import trade might be done in them with Europe. Two classes of fruit will, therefore, have to be considered,

and two interests conciliated ; but this applies to other Natal products besides fruit.

The wattle-bark, known as Cape mimosa, is a very profitable business. The trees grow very rapidly, and there is a handsome turnover at least every five years. It seems as though there were practically no limit to the demand for wattle-bark, and after the first planting there is no further labour. The danger to be guarded against is grass-firing, as many valuable plantations have been destroyed by this means. The great bulk of the wattle is at present shipped to England, but it is only a question of time before a large amount will be worked in Natal.

The Angora goat thrives to perfection in the thorn veldt ; and though ostrich-farming miscarried when first introduced some years ago, the failure appears to have been solely due to rashness in rushing into an undertaking without any previous knowledge of the subject.

One remarkable feature in Natal is the great variety and beauty of the grasses. Whether the famous ramie or rhea grass will flourish so far from the tropics or not remains to be seen ; but there are many grasses besides which the natives have long put to different uses. Of some they make baskets ; others are twisted into rope and so forth. The exploitation of Natal grass has been strangely missed by commerce.

This last omission is about to be remedied. About 1,000 acres near Port Shepstone, in Alfred County, have been planted with fibre aloe by a settlement of Norwegians, and it is contemplated to increase the plantation very considerably at an early date. The aloe will grow generally in Natal, except in the Berg

district ; but it should be remembered that in this, as in many other raw products, the best returns are only obtained in the localities best suited for it. It matters nothing to the merchant or manufacturer where his fibre comes from, provided it is of the right quality ; but to the producer it makes all the difference possible whether he gets only one crop in a year, while other people get two. A farmer must never look only upon market prices. He must consider his soil, climate, transport, labour, and then see whether he can 'do' his fibre as cheaply as it is 'done' elsewhere.

A company is being started in England to take up the growing of Natal grass and fibre, and treat it with machinery. There has been very little attempted, comparatively speaking, for some years past, owing to the difficulty of getting a machine which treats, or decorticates, the fibre satisfactorily. This obstacle appears to have been overcome by a new patent,* which, however, has not yet come into general use, and of which little is known. There was a scheme for a company which should supply farmers with the machinery at an annual rent ; and this seems the best plan, since it would prevent growers being at the mercy of the machine-owners. In that case a fibre market might be opened in Durban similar to the wool market.

Growers must never lose sight of the fact that, at least with ramie grass, they will be competing with the climate and conditions in the particularly favoured districts of India where ramie grows to perfection.

* This process is said not to depend wholly upon machinery, but includes chemical treatment, which seems to point to the probability of large factories, as wherever chemicals are employed a large business is cheaper to manage than a small one.

It requires a warm climate and a little rain every day, and the expert knowledge consists chiefly of knowing exactly when to cut it. Where perfect ramie will not grow, it is better to grow some other plant which excels. The great thing to be guarded against is the loss caused by taking up what is not really suited to the soil, and, by throwing a quantity of bad or indifferent stuff into the market, injuring the reputation of the whole.

It would seem that there is an opening for cheap furniture. The bamboo and other canes flourish, and, together with the strong grasses, it is impossible not to believe that, with a little direction, excellent cheap light furniture, suitable to the climate—after the fashion of Chinese and Japanese ware—might be made in Natal. All furniture comes out from England. It is expensive, owing to the heavy freights. The plush and velvet seats are hot and uncomfortable, and it costs to buy this furniture about three times what it cost to produce it. An alternative is offered by Madeira chairs, which, again, are comparatively dear, owing to freights.

The greatest farming industry is that of sheep, and it is one which continues to offer farmers who can add to it other stock, such as dairy cattle, an excellent investment. It must, however, be borne in mind that the wools in Natal tend to softness, and it seems impossible to put a hard wool into the Durban market. The great drawback to sheep and cattle is not disease, although diseases exist, but ticks, which are actually worse. 'If Government said to me,' are the words of Mr. Morton, of Tweedie Hall, 'I will take away either all your diseases, or else the ticks, whichever you please, I should say, Leave me the diseases, and take the ticks.'

There is no preventive of ticks known to man. The only means of combating the evil is to be on the watch, and remove each tick by dabbing oil on the spot.

The dairy cattle at Tweedie Hall consist of a cross between Ayrshires and Frieslanders. This has produced a very handsome class of cattle—brown-black, with white markings.

Elsewhere the Devon are much in vogue, and Mr. Lloyd inclined to the belief that eventually the Devon will be the chief breed. Afrikander are found almost everywhere. On the coast small Zulu cattle and the breed called Macattee, from the north of the Transvaal, with curiously waved horns, are most common. The shorthorn is simply a disastrous failure in these warm localities.

The Natalians are fully alive to the necessity of improved transport, and prefer the small breed of cattle for the purpose. Mules are being used along the coast, and answer well there. There is a good deal of interest shown in horse-breeding, and until horse-sickness broke out, there was an export trade to India in horses. Having a cavalry regiment stationed at Maritzburg does a good deal to promote the improvement in horses.

The best farmers in Natal consider two points: First, the shelter of their cattle in sheds and yards similar to those on English farms, both in the extreme heat of the sun and the cold of winter nights. On the high land of Natal, some 3,000 feet above the sea-level, the winter is often severe. Frost, snow, and cold winds combine to make the nights trying on bare hills which resemble Sussex downs. So far as human beings are

concerned, this bracing season is extremely beneficial ; but, then, human beings are not expected to lie out on the veldt all night. It is quite possible that English down sheep will answer well on this high ground, and an effort has been made of late to import them.

Too much stress can hardly be laid on the necessity for tree-planting. Little or nothing is done in this way in Natal, and yet it would appear that large trees would grow better here than at the Cape. Pines do not answer except on very high ground ; but the stink-wood is indigenous, and possibly the pencil-cedar and some of the eucalypti might be introduced with success. It is not only for the value of timber, but to afford shade and shelter against the extremes of climate.

The second point is one in which English farmers will recognise something in common with their own experience. It is the great effort made to obtain feeding-stuffs in the scarce or winter season. Ensilage has been tried, but does not answer. Mealie-hay—that is, the green maize mown, dried, and stacked—appears to be the favourite dry forage. Then, some farmers sow oats early, and turn their cattle in to feed the crop. When it shoots up again, it is either left to mature or fed down again, after which the land is ploughed and another crop put in before the summer. Lucerne does not answer in Natal, probably on account of the want of lime in the soil. Clovers do not seem to have been tried, but English grasses are increasing in general favour. Of these the cock's-foot is the best, but fescues are spoken of as a good mixture. It is not merely as a temporary pasture that these grasses succeed ; they thrive so well as to kill the native grass and take its

place. The nourishing power of the English grass is much greater than that of the Natal, and it remains green longer in the dry or winter season, probably because it is hardier.

The necessity for changing the food of stock is far better understood in Natal than in Bechuanaland, where it is only dawning upon farmers that a change of some kind, if only from sour to sweet veldt, is beneficial.

Cattle diseases scarcely seem to be of the same virulence, although Natal farmers complain bitterly of them, and claim to have all the several kinds. It does not appear that the ground itself is accused of being poisoned. The best farmers take the precaution of dosing their cattle about once a fortnight, and a farmer gave the present writer the following prescription as a good regular dose for all stock, young or old :

100 lb. common salt.
10 „ flowers of sulphur.
6 „ copperas.
3 „ saltpetre.
3 „ lime (powdered).

To this mixture he frequently adds in the dry season 3 lb. of crushed bones.

One other feature in the Natal farms which is not often seen in the Cape is the shed containing machinery. Chaff-cutters have not yet reached Bechuanaland. In the Malmesbury district there is a good deal of nonsense talked about self-binders and deep ploughing. But if self-binders are driven about the land there, they must twirl round in the air in search of the crop, and if deep ploughing has been ever perpetrated, it must have been a useless performance in a wheat country

where the soil is already too light. The subject of ploughs is not a settled one in Africa. In Natal multiple ploughs are used, but the soil there is generally deep and admits of deeper ploughing. Horse-hoes and grubbers are also found on the best farms, besides harrows, etc.

It is hardly possible to imagine farming at all with less machinery than is used in Natal, and before very long there will be more in general use in Bechuanaland and the Cape. It is not merely a saving in human labour, but also in horse labour and in time, for it stands to reason that machinery works more rapidly than a human being. Still, the necessity for machinery is not so urgent as elsewhere where the labour supply is insufficient, and on hills such as Natal, and on broken rocky ground such as the Cape, human labour will always be resorted to very largely. What is really most necessary is the adaptation of machinery to soils and localities. English ploughs do not answer in Cape Colony, and are generally rejected in favour of American. Some such invention as the jumping plough, used in Australia for ploughing over stumpy ground, might be adapted for the stony or rocky land in Bechuanaland and the Karroo. The makers of English machinery would do well to turn their attention to these points, and try to manufacture for the requirements of the colonies.

One point must always be remembered in speaking of Natal farming. It is the fact that the Government of the country rests mainly with the merchant classes, supported by the artisan vote. How will this affect the farming interest? There is at present an alliance between the land and the city of Durban. The mer-

chants desire the comfort of cheap and plentiful fresh provisions. They also, in their relations to the export trade, desire to have wool, mohair, bark, and other goods to ship as return cargoes. So far they are likely to be ready enough to pass measures tending towards the assistance of agriculture. Railways and cheap transport in any form are matters which will receive their cordial support; but when it comes to dealing locally in factories with certain products, such as grass, sugar, etc., the case may change its bearings.

Both the tea and sugar of Natal are very important industries. As they depend upon the land, they must be classed as agricultural subjects; but they also include manufactures, since without factories these products are useless. The tinning and preserving of fruits is a similar industry, and if the tanneries of Durban, which were started on a small scale some years ago, and are now said to be emerging into a paying concern, should continue to prosper, there will be another addition to the new interest shared between the merchant and the farmer. Should ramie grass succeed in Natal, machinery for its cleaning and combing prior to packing must inevitably be introduced. Hitherto coffee has not been taken up with much zeal; but should the same class of men fasten upon this berry who have already pushed the tea and sugar, there can be no valid reason why coffee should not take its place with other products of like kind. Another important crop is tobacco, the curing of which already appears better understood than in Cape Colony.

Before considering what effect these developments may have in the future policy of Natal, it will be as

well to see what has been done already in the two leading industries of tea and sugar.

FURTHER PARTICULARS OF RAMIE CULTIVATION.

A new industry is best started gradually, and grafted, as it were, on an older and perhaps less profitable one. In this way ramie should be commenced where fruit or tea or sugar are the staple, and by degrees, as ramie is found to answer, more land, time, and capital could be devoted to it.

It is a cultivation which from first to last requires elaborate care, for it must inevitably be put into the market in as perfect condition as possible. To obtain this condition, it is first of all essential to secure an even growth of stalks, not merely as regards length and size, but uniformity of growth in the individual stalk. It must not be stunted. A stem of ramie grows rapidly where there is sufficient moisture, but is stunted and of hard, imperfect growth when opposite conditions prevail. Where there is unevenness of quality in the crop, the fibre is adversely affected, for in the after-process to fit it for spinning, treatment necessary to reduce the hard-stunted growth to the condition of spinable fibre would wholly disintegrate and ruin the structure of the fibre in the softer and better-grown stalk. The waste and loss which must ensue is obvious, and this point should be dwelt upon in South Africa, where the mixing of bad wool in the centre of bales of good wool is a common practice, and held to be astute and clever.

It is as well to start from seeds in the first instance, taking care to obtain the best—probably from China. Then a piece of ground in a garden well protected, and in light, well-cultivated soil, should be dug and turned over once or twice, and divided into small beds about 6 by 4 feet. The surface should be pressed down with the back of a spade till it is moderately firm, and raked level. The evening before the seed is to be sown the beds should be watered with a spray or rose. The following morning they should be once more lightly raked and smoothed. The seed is very fine, and should be mixed with damp mould or earth at the rate of 1 pint of seed to 6 pints of earth. This amount of seed is sufficient for six beds of the size indicated.

The mixture is sown evenly over the surface of the beds. It is not covered with soil, but lightly pressed down with the back of a spade. Thin mats must then be stretched on sticks about 2 feet above the beds. This will keep them sufficiently moist, and protect the germinating seeds from the sun. No water is given until the young plants are up, but, if necessary, the shading mats are sprinkled by means of a broom dipped in water. The mats are removed at night, that the young plants may catch the dew, and they are laid aside altogether when the plants are 2 inches high.

If the beds should become dry, they are now watered, and watering may be repeated whenever necessary. The beds should be kept clear of weeds. As soon as the plants are big enough to handle, and before they become crowded, they are transplanted to the field, a wet day being chosen for the purpose. They are taken up with a spade, keeping a small ball of earth round the roots of each, and planted about 9 inches apart. The ground should be kept carefully weeded until the plants are 12 inches high, when no further attention is necessary.

If roots are obtained, they should be planted in the field 18 inches apart. From first to last the chief consideration is to keep the plants steadily growing. The beds in which ramie is grown should be 6 feet wide, with a passage 3 feet wide between. Ramie can be propagated by means of layering, and roots should be kept in beds set apart for the purpose of propagation. They should be laid in slantingly, 2 or 3 inches of earth covering their tops, and so planted 3 or 4 feet apart. The earth in between must be carefully cultivated, and kept clean and loose. When the first stalks have attained the height of about 3 feet, they are ready for layering. The ground then should be thoroughly moistened, and the stalks bent gently down, fastened with small crotchets, and covered above the crotchet with earth to about 3 inches, the rest of the layered stalk remaining uncovered. Care must be taken not to break the stalk from the parent root. In the course of three or four weeks the layers will have rooted and made stalks which can in turn be layered, so that a number of plants will be propagated, in order to increase the plantation in the field.

Cuttings can also be taken of ramie. The stalks are prepared by being divided into lengths of 5 or 6 inches. They are set obliquely, and nearly covered with earth, and if the work is done before hot weather commences, they will require neither watering

nor shading, but must be kept clean of weeds. In two weeks they will have rooted, and can be transplanted.

As soon as the beds become crowded, care must be taken to remove every alternate plant. The land must also be perfectly and carefully prepared for the reception of the fresh plants, so that there may be no check to the growth.

When once a good plant of ramie is established, it will go on for years. The moving of the stalks must be done exactly when the growth attains perfection, and in dry weather water must be given to encourage the growth. In India, where ramie is cultivated, it is arranged so that a fresh piece comes to perfection each day—as much as the grower knows he can mow. Therefore the mowing goes on steadily at the same rate as the growing.

With regard to manure, the best known hitherto is the ash from the furnace of the decorticating engines. The mass of pith is so great and solid as the engines turn it out that it is used as fuel, and the ash is found to be of great assistance when spread lightly on the ramie fields. No other manure is applied.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TEA, SUGAR, AND COFFEE.

THE tea-plant is indigenous to Natal, and was first discovered some sixteen years ago. In quality the wild-tea of Natal cannot bear comparison with the wild-coffee. This last, if simply gathered in its natural state, is very superior to the ordinary Brazil, and samples which reached the London market at once gave it a rank of its own. Yet, for no assignable reason, the tea industry has flourished, while that of coffee has dwindled, and almost died out.

Few products are so fastidious as to soil and climate as tea. Consequently there is not much land where it can be attempted. The tea plantations are situated near each other, and do not cover a very large area at present. They lie to the north of Durban, about ten miles south of the Tugela. The nearest town is Verulam, a small station started many years ago by a band of Wesleyans, and this persuasion still influences that part of the country. The railway from Durban ends at Verulam, and there is a drive of about forty miles before the tea country is reached. The sea is visible at intervals all the way, and the rich subtropical vegetation becoming more and more lovely with every mile makes the journey a very enjoyable one.

For the tea-planters, however, it is a great misfor-

tune that the railway should have terminated at Verulam. No other industry is so dependent upon transport. The matter is one not merely of cost of transit, but of the time occupied. It must be obvious to everyone that enormous risk is encountered by tea which has to remain packed in waggons for so long a time.

Sometimes the rivers rise in flood, and the waggons have been known to remain waiting for the waters to go down for six weeks before the Umvoti could be crossed. Some years ago a great effort was made by Mr. Hindson, of Nonoti, to induce the Government to extend the railway to the tea district. His firm undertook to supply the capital necessary for laying down the new line; but the Governor, Sir Charles Mitchel, did not approve of railways being made in the colony by private enterprise. It is also possible that he did not consider the tea industry by itself sufficiently promising at that time to merit a railway. Since then tea has struggled through enormous obstacles, and Mr. Hulett, combining the opening of the coal-mines in the Tugela district with his large tea plantations near Stanger, has been successful in obtaining the desired railway, which is now in course of construction.

On Mr. Hindson's estate at Nonoti, which is not by any means the largest, there are 500 acres laid down in tea. There has been about £40,000 put into this estate, and the greatest economy has been exercised. It has only been started twelve years, and as at the commencement it suffered immense drawbacks inseparable from a pioneer undertaking in any country, the amount of progress made is certainly satisfactory. A new industry of the kind must be experimental at

the outset. Mr. Hindson found that the first planters had been content to collect wild-tea, and plant it upon land which appeared suitable. Since those early days the Assam hybrid was introduced, and at the present time Mr. Hindson is trying the introduction of a new Indian tea, which he hopes will be an improvement.

The influence of soil and climate is fully as marked in tea as it is in wine, either prejudicing or improving the flavour. In fact, both soil and climate are features in this business, the importance of which it is impossible to overrate. Then there is the taste of the market to be considered. The tea-grower is bound to study this matter, and use whatever means he can to procure a junction between the consumers' palate and whatever it suits his soil and climate to produce.

Besides, there is the very serious consideration of labour. In no manufacture under the sun, wine itself not excepted, is the manipulation more critical than in tea. This difficulty retarded the tea plantations for some years, and has only been overcome by the importation of coolies.

In spite of all these difficulties, and admitting that perfection in the tea has by no means been reached, there is such steady improvement shown on all sides that it is confidently hoped Natal teas will rival, and even excel, those of India and Ceylon. Three important points are already ascertained: First, that the natural produce of the tea-plant itself is far more abundant in Natal than in India; secondly, that, owing to the climate, coolie labourers accomplish twice the amount of labour in Natal that they can in India; thirdly, that an increasing local market exists, which is scarcely the case in India. Wherever, as at Nonoti, a river

can be turned to good account, to drive the machinery, a further immense saving is effected. And the opening of the coal-mines and railway will further add to the cheapening of production by improving the transport.

At Messrs. Hulett and Sons' factory at Kearsney there is a plantation of Manipurri tea already started, but hitherto the leaf has not been gathered. There is a very large acreage under tea at Kearsney, and besides what is grown on the estate itself, a good deal of green leaf is bought from small growers and worked up in the factory. As much as 500,000 lb. per annum are made at Kearsney.

The initial expenses of tea are very heavy. Only the best machinery, and plenty of it, combined with great experience and care in the management, will enable it to make a return. It is not a commodity which improves with keeping, yet a certain time is necessary for its flavour to mature.

There are many things which will be facilitated as the colony is generally developed. Railways will render machinery easier to transport, and cheaper transit will bring larger markets within reach, whose demand will be regular and dependable.

The taste of the public in Africa has been habituated to the China teas; and as these do not answer in Natal, some difficulty has been found in making way with the colonial product, and a very low price has had to be placed upon it in consequence. In Natal itself there is a Protective tariff upon tea, but it is highly problematical how long it will be maintained, when the feeling is so strong in favour of Free Trade. The Transvaal tax and the high railway rate are very injurious to the South African tea industry. Both assessment and rate are upon weight, but in tea-making the same sprig of the

plant produces all grades of tea. The top leaf is golden Pekoe ; the second, Pekoe ; the third, Pekoe Souchong ; the fourth, Souchong. All these are picked at once, and undergo the same process of fermentation, rolling and bruising, and firing. Then comes the sifting and sorting, whereby the small leaves pass first through a long cylinder-shaped sieve. The last to pass are the large hard Souchong, and these have to undergo another grinding and crushing, to break them up and render them fit for use. Consequently the cheapest tea requires the most manipulation, and a machine to be run expressly for itself. Where the tax and tariff is on weight, it is more than enough to render this cheap tea a loss to the manufacturer by the time it reaches Johannesburg. Therefore the market for cheap tea is closed there, and the poor consumer is deprived of even a moderately good cup of tea, for it is only the most expensive commodity which will pay. Johannesburg still offers a wealthy centre where a fastidious class are willing to pay a good price for a good article, and it is the chance of obtaining this price which is the aim of the producer.

The use of tea in general is on the increase, and now that the Natal tea has reached a certain grade of excellence, it will probably go on gaining in the market both in Cape Colony and Natal. In London we have a glut of good tea, and there is every prospect of the market being over-supplied for some time to come. Natal tea will not pay to import. It has nothing sufficiently striking about it to cause a commotion, and the price it would fetch wholesale is insufficient to make good the cost and risk of the voyage.

The highest altitude on the Nonoti Peak tea estate

is 1,500 feet above sea-level, and the highest altitude at which tea is planted is 1,200 feet. These plantations are on a slope running seawards to the boundary of the estate, which is 800 feet above the sea. The most productive ground consists of a small hollow, where the soil is very dark and rich. Here the best tea is grown, and it is from the yield on this small low-lying area that the probable value of the year's yield is gauged.

Sugar-cane grows splendidly all along the coast of Natal. It was originally found wild, and requires very little cultivation. There is a tall, strong cane called Green Natal, which sometimes reaches 12 feet in height, and the smaller kinds, the more popular of which is the Purple lousier. Owing to the extraordinary fertility of the soil, no manure is used or required, but the rubbish left on the plantation, after the ratoonns are cut, is burnt, and a fresh kind of cane planted. This fertility may become exhausted in time, as no land appears able to produce sugar-cane continuously without suffering deprivation, and if so, the question of manure will be a serious one.

The cane in Natal takes longer to mature than in the West Indies. It is slow in starting the first year, and consequently a crop of maize or mealies is generally sown between the rows of plants, and is ripe and gathered before the latter has grown many inches.

The chief point in the sugar industry has been the cheapening of the process of manufacture. At the factory at Mount Edgecomb the industry may be seen to great advantage, but at one time ruin seemed imminent for the company, and it is only during the last few years that it has been placed upon a paying footing. The estate consists of 12,000 acres, which are under

cane, and the company is also a large purchaser from the small growers in the neighbourhood.

It often pays a farmer very well to put a portion of his land under cane for a couple of years. The chief risk is want of rain, as cane loves moisture, and grows rampantly in low or damp land. Quite recently the locusts have eaten the young tips of the rattoons, but otherwise the cane does not suffer. The green top is pulled off when the cane is cut, and used to plant again, and as there are generally four or five rattoons shooting from one plant, there are always abundance of these head-pieces for replanting. The green blade makes excellent forage for cows, so that a farmer makes a good all-round profit off a couple of acres of sugar-cane.

As will clearly be seen, it is a case in which agriculture is strictly and entirely dependent on a factory, and quite helpless unless the factory is driven upon commercial principles and able to make a profit. It is only fair to say that there appear to be no complaints on the part of the farmers of the treatment they receive from the mill-owners. This may be taken as an indication that the mill-owners find their business a prosperous concern, and are anxious to increase their output. At Mount Edgecomb the mill only crushes during seven months of the year; the average output is about 120 tons a week, and frequently the whole week's output is under consignment before it is actually made. There are therefore more than the elements of prosperity in the concern.

The manufacturers do not complain of markets, although the necessity for pushing their sales, and for strict economy in the factory by turning every scrap of waste to account, is readily acknowledged.

As with tea, there is a small duty imposed on sugar in Natal, and this has been just sufficient to tide the factories over their initial and experimental stages. At one time it appeared possible that cheap beetroot sugar would come in and ruin the struggling cane industry, but that danger is happily passed. The best sugar, and that in most common use in the colonies, is a very high-class crystalline white. The demand for this product in South Africa alone is sufficient to keep the mills going; but within the last year new machinery has been shipped to manufacture loaf-sugar, which, it is thought, will be more popular, and perhaps lead to Natal gaining a footing in the home market. Should it be able to oust the German bounty-fed article, certainly all good wishes must go with our colony.

Cane grows well in Rhodesia, and no doubt some day in the future sugar will be made there, but till then Natal will have the monopoly; and if we consider the rapid rate at which the population increases, and the numerous manufactures in which sugar plays an important part, especially in a land of fruit such as South Africa, there is certainly little to fear from over-production.

Coffee was grown successfully for a time near Durban. The high quality of the berry is undoubted, and in the year 1870 the output was estimated at over 1,000,000 lb. The cause of the breakdown of the industry was twofold. First, the appearance of the blight known as *Hamelia vastatrix*. Second, the impetus given to tea-growing by the sudden introduction of capital into that business.

It is said that there is no cure for this blight, which appears to be a kind of fungus, although some people

call it a small beetle. But no continuous effort was made to get rid of the difficulty, and science was not called into the field, as in the case of the phylloxera and similar troubles elsewhere. There was an impression at that time in Natal that fortunes were to be made there without trouble; but subsequent experience in other departments has by this time assisted to cure that delusion.

Mention has frequently been made of the highly local nature of South African products, and with reference to coffee there is a very peculiar instance. At East London, in Cape Colony, the farmers are pretty well ruined from drought and locusts, but there is one man who possesses a small piece of ground where he grows coffee, which answers so well that he makes enough to live upon out of it. Locusts will not touch it, and the *Hamelia vastatrix* has not yet broken out there. The coffee is said to be of very fine flavour, and fetches a good price in the market. It is not native to that country, but a few plants were brought down the coast and planted there on trial.

It is opportunities of this kind, and the enterprise to try one thing where another fails, and thus by experiment to advance the knowledge of possibilities, which is most needed in South African farming.

The difficulty of getting really good coffee in Africa is very great. Though it is the most ordinary Boer drink, and all the Dutch drink a great deal too much of it, the beverage which they swallow in such quantities does not deserve the name of coffee. It is imported from Brazil in bags, and is presented to the guest on arriving at every Dutch house in a weak decoction. It is a cup which neither cheers nor inebriates, and the hospitality it represents is the only feature about it to render it bearable.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE POPULATION OF NATAL.

CONCLUSION.

REFERENCE has been made to the subject of labour in Natal. The subject stands quite apart from any of like kind in South Africa. The two factors on which it hinges are climate and products. There can be no doubt whatever that the climate along the coast is not one in which Europeans can labour. At the same time, it is precisely along the coast that most activity prevails at the present time, and it is there that the future employment of artisans and mechanics will be in request for factories, workshops, and houses.

In the wine industry of Cape Colony there is no call for mechanics or artisans. Neither do the farming operations in general make any great demand, though here and there work for a good mason in building a dam, or for a carpenter in erecting a farm-house, is occasionally provided. The climate throughout Cape Colony is not such as to prohibit a man working hard for at least eight hours out of the twenty-four, although he would find it better to begin earlier and continue later than at home, and do rather less in the middle of the day. The same applies, though in a somewhat modified degree, to the high lands of Natal.

But along the coast-belt, in a subtropical climate,

the steamy heat through the greater part of the year takes the strength out of a European, and the slightest indiscretion makes him liable to coast-fever. There is little to wonder at in his becoming inert and lethargic ; and as he finds himself one of the ruling race, he soon begins to expect the black races to wait on him. The next step is an independence, which is superior to industry, and leads him to demand occupation rather than work.

Now, when it is remembered that the gospel of South Africa is *work*, the condition which leaves affairs in the hands of men physically and mentally demoralized, in the manner described above, must obviously be very unsatisfactory. Hard human labour supplied in one service or another lays down the one royal road to success in Africa ; and this is as much the case in the industries in tropical or subtropical climates as in other localities which are more temperate.

It must be remembered that, directly the products of a country are of such a nature as to compete with those of Asiatic countries, the labour applied to them must be of the same character and the same cost. Wherever there is any item in the output of a business which exceeds that in the same business elsewhere, some means must be found for recovering it, or else the business will become unsound. Either the market must be increased (and if a manufacturer has to work it up, there must be additional capital, and again the question of returns comes in), or the market must be more easily approached by cheaper transport, or the cost of production be diminished by better machinery or cheaper labour, or, finally, Protective tariffs must be put on.

In Natal it was found that expenses in general were

so heavy that neither tea nor sugar could pay. A Protective tariff was given the industries, and this, it must be remembered, is not the best policy. It means raised prices, whereas the best way to profits is by cheapening production. Even under the tariffs, neither tea nor sugar was profitable, until the Government imported coolie labour, from Calcutta and Madras. It is this cheapening of labour which brings the Asiatic products in Natal to a level with Asiatic products in Asia itself, and has enabled the sugar to make profits, and greatly encouraged the tea. Still, it must be borne in mind that the cost of transport is very heavy upon tea, and until this is reduced there will not be large returns upon the business. In both undertakings the necessity for cutting down expenses is the ever-recurring anxiety; and when the cost of British mechanics and carpenters, both of whom are necessary in the machinery and packing departments, amounts to from 12s. to 18s. per diem per man, it will be understood that there is a great drain on the business through this item.

The wisdom of the policy of introducing indentured coolies has been very sharply criticised. Cape Colony has lifted up her voice and cried 'Shocking!' in the most piercing tones, and cited as a warning her own affliction of Malays, under which she groans in helpless misery.

Many of the older Natalians themselves, especially those connected with mission interests, have been very averse to the importation of Indians. They held, and with great justice, that it was the duty of settlers in Natal to make use of the native Kaffirs, and train them in the arts of peace and the paths of civilization. The better the coolie became known, the more cordially he

was disliked, till to-day he is the best-hated creature in Africa.

Those who believed they were taking the Kaffir's part against the alien Asiatic were moved by sentiment which had some reason in it, though that reason did not enable them to institute a policy on the subject. The Zulu is a noble specimen of Bantu. Handsome, fearless, simple, and capable of fidelity, he is, in fact, the aristocrat of the Kaffir tribes. The Swazi is certainly less gifted than the Zulu, but he compares very favourably with the nondescript 'boy' at the Cape or Port Elizabeth. Both are far more 'raw Kaffirs' than the others. Civilization has not yet had time to teach them its vices. Liquor is not allowed to be sold to them, and there is a vast difference between the Kaffir where he is kept sober by Act of Parliament and the free Kaffir, who revels in an equality with the white man.

But the very simplicity of the Zulu prevents his caring to work. The small hut-tax imposed by Government is easily got by some means or other, and as soon as it is earned there is no further occasion to work. The ruling idea of the most industrious Kaffir is to work hard to earn enough quickly to enable him to do nothing for as long a spell as possible. It is perfectly true that he works as no other living creature will work while he is at it; but this activity may terminate at any moment. Then he simply demands his money and goes away. The ship may go without her coals, the waggon remain unloaded, but Sambo has no other answer than: 'Me no work to-day, baas.'

Those amongst them who have learnt to admire the English, and wish to imitate them, have acquired a strong motive for making money. The Kaffir is child-

ishly vain, and possesses an imitative faculty which may one day become histrionic. He very soon learns to despise the beads and feathers and tiger-skins of his early days, and aims at a pair of trousers. At first he buys these second-hand, and if they do not fit, he lengthens or widens them, as the case requires, with scraps of any material he can pick up. He works and he saves till he gets more or less clad in ragged cast-off clothes bought in pieces; but still he works on and saves, till one Sunday he is able to walk down the streets of Durban in a white shirt and black tie, a black coat and gray trousers, with a white waistcoat, boots, gloves, a sailor straw hat, a pocket-handkerchief, a cane and a buttonhole, all dazzlingly new. The road to such attainments is much shortened by the goldfields, where, until the recent reduction in wages, a Kaffir could sell his labour for £3 or £5 a month. There are few amongst them strong enough to withstand the temptations of Johannesburg, where drink is supplied cheap and bad at low canteens. Sometimes he prefers domestic service to work at the mines, for the Kaffir has distinct ideas about comfortable living, and is easily attracted by small luxuries. When he returns to Durban, he is, between drink and great notions, a ruined character so far as domestic purposes are concerned. 'How's this, Sambo?' inquired an Englishman of a Kaffir he knew, who was lounging near the municipal buildings. 'What are you doing? I thought you were working for Mrs. Brown.' 'Oh no, massa! Me did try dat missus, but, oh my! dat war an cheeky missus! Me no work for dat missus!' Sambo lounged until he was put into prison, and when he came out he went back to Johannesburg to become 'the social pest.'

Thus have the Kaffirs in Natal been spoilt, and when a glance is cast round to see what has been done to get the 500,000 living in the country into working habits, it cannot be said that there is any sign of a hopeful policy even in the air.

To make inquiries of farmers is to be told that without coolies they could not work their farms, although they prefer Kaffirs. The case is far stronger wherever machinery is employed. Not only does the Kaffir object to machinery, which appears to irritate his nerves, but his inconsequent habits render him too unreliable wherever engines are to be kept going. Then, in industries such as tea, even in the plantations, a certain amount of thoroughly-trained dexterity is requisite, especially in picking the leaf, and the Kaffir either will not acquire it, or does not care to be picking tea for the low wages which tea can afford to pay. Even on the docks the labour used is chiefly coolie.

The case is briefly as follows: The Kaffir, if he works at all, expects wages equal to those in Johannesburg. The British labourer cannot work in Natal, and the British artisan or mechanic will only work with two or three coloured men to wait on him, and expects on an average 15s. a day. Then came the idea of importing labour. For some years assisted passages were given to British emigrants. But this did not help the unskilled labour market. So far as clerks, artisans, and servants were concerned, the high wages offered in Johannesburg proved so strong an attraction that assisted passages were found to be of little benefit to Natal, and therefore they were given up. At that time the Indian Government were looking out for an opening

for their enormous surplus population in certain districts in India, and a scheme was inaugurated whereby coolies were indentured for a certain period of service in Natal, and a free passage back to their own country offered them at the end of the indenture.*

In Bengal the coolies swarm at the rate of 1,280 to the cultivated square mile. There is no possibility of providing them with occupation, and they eke out a wretched existence by pilfering and getting themselves into gaol when other means fail. These people, a drug in their own labour market, condemned to sin to keep themselves alive, are the people who, *under British direction*, have developed a part of Africa.

What has been the effect upon the coolies? Are they the oppressed and ill-used race that some people would have us believe? If they are so beneficial to Natal, do they receive no benefits themselves?

The answer is given by a thousand facts. First, we find that the free passage back to India is very seldom accepted. At the end of the indenture the coolies prefer to remain on as free labourers. So attractive is the life of the coolie in Natal that many free Asiatics pay their own passage-money and come to settle in Natal of their own free will. Not the least interesting feature in the case is the fact, that though the indentured coolies are acknowledged to be a low and criminal class in their own country, there is something so beneficial in the

* The terms of coolie indenture are as follows : The indenture is for labourers for a period of five years at wages ranging from 10s. to 14s. per month for adult males, and 5s. to 7s. for females. Rations, medical attendance, and lodging must also be provided by the employer in accordance with Government regulations. The passage money of £17 10s. must be paid in yearly instalments of £3 10s.

change of their circumstances in Natal that the official return states the percentage of crime amongst them is very small. The physical improvement in the coolie is even more remarkable. A fair supply of good food and a colder climate strengthens and develops the men, while both women and children lose the lean, famished appearance common amongst them on first landing, and become more like human beings.

Unfortunately the matter ends here. Neither for Kaffirs nor coolies is there any policy in Natal. The law simply permits the coolie to come into the country and bring his Indian habits with him; no conditions are made with him, nor are his immoral habits expected to alter. The merchants, who have managed their municipality admirably, and have treated the artisans and clerks in their employment with marked wisdom, seem to have exhausted their interest and to be incapable of grasping necessities beyond these two points. As has been pointed out, the farming class has not hitherto played a large part in the colony, and the missionaries, who have been from the first in touch with the Zulus, were not likely to favour a native policy bearing any resemblance to the Glen Grey Act in Cape Colony.

The coolies are now a large part of the population of Natal, and form at least two classes. For a time natives from Mozambique were brought into the country, and this was not a wise movement, for it increased the element of nefarious trade which is the worst feature in Natal. Many of the free Asiatics followed merely to trade, and numbers of the coolies who had served their indenture started trading on their own account instead of returning to India, and this traffic is extremely bad.

The interests of these people conflicted with the

interests of the merchants at Durban, and considerable ill-will was stirred up against the coolies in general. Strange as it may seem, there was no suggestion made of any policy to control what was a positive evil in the colony, and spreading like a canker on all sides.

The matter assumed the form of a question when an Indian named Ghandi, a barrister from Calcutta, arrived in Natal, and took up the coolies. He first endeavoured to arouse in them the feeling that they were ill-used, and endeavoured to get them to agitate to procure the franchise. Something like a whirlwind of wrath was aroused in Natal by this proposition. At first the Imperial Government was inclined to side with the coolies, and in this most loyal colony an ominous growl was heard against imperial authority.

The idea was manifestly absurd, as well as mischievous. The coolies have no interest whatever in the vote. They are not the class which exercises the franchise in India, nor did they lose it by coming to Natal as indentured labourers. But if they had done so, there would have been no justice in giving it to a low class of aliens, who showed no self-governing sentiment. Their habits are totally immoral and degraded. They are without the most rudimentary notions of sanitation, and they are quite uneducated. Considering that in numbers they equal the white population, to bestow on them the right of influencing the Legislature was simply for the governing class, who had pushed the fortunes of Natal, and who themselves provided these off-scourings of India with the best chances of livelihood and decency that they had ever had, to surrender the reins of government.

Nor did the matter end there. It has been urged

as poetical justice that the coolie should be given a vote. But where would be either the poetry or the justice in giving the coolie the power of legislating for the Kaffirs, who, after all, were the original land-owners, and to whom the British are responsible for the government of the country?

The matter was closed for the time being by Imperial Government giving its assent in the usual manner to a Bill which confined the franchise only to those coolies who had exercised it in their own country.

Shortly afterwards the sugar interest petitioned to be allowed to introduce indentured coolie artisans, and at first the Immigration Board gave its consent. Then came an agitation throughout Natal on the part of the British artisans, who saw their trades threatened, and the permission was withdrawn. Speeches were made which were no credit to the British artisans; and the threat was held out to the tea and sugar industries that the tariffs which had helped them to float should be removed. It was even hinted that the coolies should be sent back wholesale to their own country.

It is necessary to consider these matters, for they point to some facts of fundamental importance. We are given an instance of what is common in Africa, and yet is always an occasion for surprise. There is a marked want of the ability which can initiate statesmanlike action. There may be good men who may know what would be good to be done, but they cannot formulate it or carry it out. Hence it is that there is no coolie policy and no Kaffir policy aiming at any distinct object in Natal.

There is no programme which has for its aim the development of agriculture. In Cape Colony we are

confronted by a difficulty which renders cattle-breeding practically impossible, namely, the diseases rife throughout the country. But at present there is no such thing as a line proposed or adhered to by any party in the State by which this awful trouble shall be stamped out.

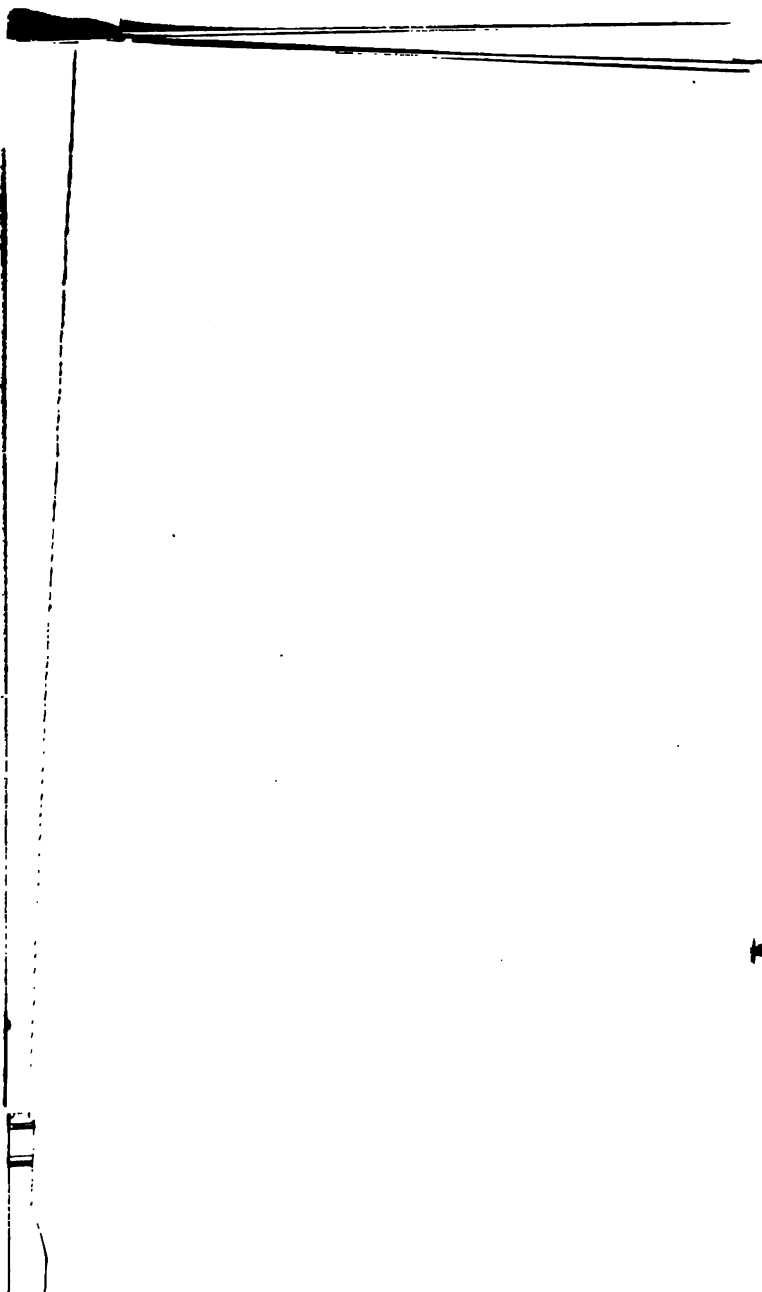
In Natal there is the canker of illicit trade, but beyond one timid and doubtful measure, which throws the responsibility of administration largely upon individual magistrates in the case of bankruptcies, nothing has been done to impose restrictions upon the dishonest and fraudulent practices of certain traders, who set themselves to work to ruin the simple Kaffir.

It may be that in our colonies there are too many small pecuniary interests at stake. There is no independent class large enough to wield its influence in behalf of the common good such as we have at home. There is no Civil Service entirely independent of the popular feeling in the country. There are men who devote their lives to studying the problems of the State, notably those affecting agriculture, contented to work hard upon small salaries, who *know what should be done*, and yet who are compelled to pigeon-hole their reports.

The hope of Africa lies in the strength of a man independent enough to say, 'I don't want your money; if I want money I can find it'—whose clear intellect will enable him to collect round him the men *who know*, to assist him in formulating a policy whereby the several interests in South Africa may be simultaneously advanced, and no one permitted to impede or impair the general well-being of the commonwealth. Such a man must forget neither Kaffirs, nor Boers, nor traders, nor British, nor coolies, of any class or in any profession or walk in life. He must remember the towns,

the ports, and the mines, as well as the factories and the farms, and teach South Africans, as boys are taught in a big public school, the principles of give and take, and the ready recognition of merit where any merit is found, which is part of the training of our Universities.

This man will not be Mr. Kruger ; but should South Africa be fortunate enough to raise such a champion in her own cause, then in God's name, and in the name of our Sovereign Lady, Queen Victoria, let all good men in Africa unite in giving him their support.





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